

THE  
PREACHERS  
PLEA;

O R,

A Treatise in forme of a plaine  
dialogue, making known the worth and  
necessity of that which we call *Preaching*: shewing  
also how a man may profite by it, both for  
the informing of his Iudgement, and the  
reforming of his life.

By *Samuell Hieron* Minister of the Gospel  
at *Modbury* in the County  
of *Deuon.* 14. 4. 81

Reviewed by the Author and now the  
second time Imprinted.

1 Cor. 1, 31.

*Seeing the worlde by wisdom know not God, in  
the wisdom of God, is pleased God by the foo-  
lishnesse of Preaching to save them that be-  
leeue.*



LONDON,  
Printed for Simon Waterson.  
1605.







To the honest and well-  
disposed Reader.

**I**T is the usual manner of the most  
which publish booke, to dedicate the  
same to some honorable personage,  
or to some one of speciall place, partly  
to shew thankfulnessse for some received fa-  
uors; partly to procure credit and countenance  
to their writings, that under so good protecti-  
on, they may the more boldly passe forth to the  
common view of all men. If I now vary from  
this generall received course, thinke not I pray  
thee (good Reader) that I do it in some hu-  
mor, as if I either affected singularitye, or mis-  
liked the common custome: but know for a  
truth that there are these two causes of my so  
doing: The first is, the obscuritie of mine owne  
condition, who living heere in a remote parte,  
have wanted either will, or oportunity, or both,  
to shrowd my self under the patronage of some  
great person: The second is, the nature of this  
present Treatise: for howsoever there be (and  
that

## The Preface;

(and that not farre from the place of mine abode) some of good qualitie, vpon whose acceptance, I think, I might haue presumed yet considering, that which I haue framed, is but a homely and course discourse, meant onely for men of the plainnest fashion, I thought I should breake the rules of comelineffe and correfpondence, if I should aduance the inscription of my labour (if I may dare so to call it) to a person of higher degree, then of that mean & middle ranke, to the vse whereof, all that these following leaues containe, was alone intended. Therefore (friendly Reader) whosoever thou be, if thou be a true Nathaniel, a man of an honest and good heart, bee thy outward condition as it maye bee, though thou lye among the pots, or art behind the ewes with yong, or howsoever else, euen as it were bound in outward milery and of base esteeme in the eyes of men, yet thou art he whose patronage I affect, & in the hope of whose good allowance I take comfort. I know well that he which offereth any thing to the sight of the world, must make ready his back for the long furrowes of euery byting censurer. It was truly said of him (though but a heathen) that amongst men nothing can scape without a nippe. But what then? If thy conscience shall

giue

John 1, 47

Luke 8, 15

Psal. 68, 13

Psal. 78, 71

Psal. cvii, x

Psal. 119, 2

ΑΝΔΡΕΙΟΝ ΤΟΝ ΟΝΟΜΑΤΟΣ

ΙΣΧΥΙΣΤΟΝ ΘΕΟΤΟΙΣ.

Cearchus

apud Athen.

## The Preface.

*give this testimonie of mine endeuours, that  
 thy heart is comforted thereby, in regard that  
 thy iudgement is strengthened in so necessarye  
 a point, then let the most professed and sharp-  
 toothed carper say what he please: nay though  
 (as Iob speaketh) he shold write a booke  
 against me, yet I would take it vpon my* Iob. 31, 35  
*shoulder, and bind it as a crowne vnto*  
*me. And as Dauid reckened not of Mi-* 2 Sam. 6, 22  
*chols taunts in regarde of the honour done*  
*unto him by those religious maidens: so will I*  
*also set at naught the malicious taxings of all*  
*gaime-sayers, if I shall approue my selfe* 2 Cor. 4, 2  
*to thy conscience in the sighte of*  
*God.*

*If thou now demaunde of mee, what it is*  
*which I doe heere offer vnto thee, knowe this* The sum of  
*briefly: It is a Treatise tending to the discoue-* the Treatise.  
*rie of the worthe and excellencie of the worde*  
*preached; teaching thee also, which art a con-*  
*tinuall hearer, how thou mayst by hearinge*  
*edifie thy self in thy most holy faith; is wel* Iude 20.  
*by establishing thy hart in the soundnes of*  
*truth, that so thou must not bee caried a-* Heb. 13, 9  
*bout with diuers & strange doctrins; as*  
*by framing thy self to obey fro thy hart vnto* Rom. 6, 7  
*the forme of doctrin, wherunto thou either*  
*art or shalt be deliuered. This is the summe.*

## The Preface.

The causes  
of writing it.

If thou demand againe, what hath moued me to attempt this? I answer in as few words. There are two questions common in the mouthes of many, either ignorant or ill disposed persons, by which the beautie of Preaching is and hath bene much defaced in the eyes of many not so well settled: the one is, What need al this preaching? the other is, who know eth who to beleene among these Preachers? These two demands were first hatched in hell, but since being cherished by Anabaptisticall and Popish spirits, and by them buzzed into the heads of vnlearned, vnstable, and irreligious people, they are brought vnto a duellish perfection. Somewhat I can say out of mine owne experience, that through a conceit that these two questions (as they are pressed by some wily workemen) are vnassurable, our Ministry is drawne into contempt, and the calling of a Preacher is deemed of al other professions the most superfluous, and such as may well be spared without any preiudice to the well-being of Gods Church. The giuing answer to these bellish interrogatories, as it hath many times exercised me in the execution of my publike ministry. so it hath at this time drawne me to the compiling of this present Treatise: both that those of these parts, who

1 Pet. 3, 16

## The Preface.

my knowledge haue need, and do desire it also, may haue something by them, whereupon aduisedly to deliberate for the settling of their iudgments, and that others likewise elsewhere, who (it may bee) haue experience of the like Satanicall encounters, may (instead of a better help) enioy the benefite of this that I haue laboured in. This is the maine occasion, this is my chiefe intent in this tractate: wherein, as I haue freely uttered that which I am perswaded is the truth, so will I be ready also either to alter or better my iudgement, if any man out of the worde of God shall offer to instruct mee: hauing learned this lesson, to teache what I know without grudging, and to learne that wherein I am ignorant without blushing, And though perhappes many know in this matter as much as I or any man can tell them, yet I am sure manye are ignorant, and therefore I may well maintaine my course with that sayinge of Augustine, it is better to giue him that hath, then to turn him away which hath not. It is meete that they which know should be wearied with many repetitions, then those which are unskilfull sent away empty for want of instruction. As for matters in our times, directly of this subiect I know none. If there be none, I wish there may be; for as the saying is,

Adhuc non discip.  
Sunt, magistri  
discipulorum.  
Basil. Epist. 1.  
ad Greg. Naz.

August. de bap  
contra Donat.

## The Preface.

The causes  
of writing it.

*If thou demand againe, what hath moued me to attempt this? I answer in as few words.*

*There are two questions common in the mouthes of many, either ignorant or ill disposed persons, by which the beautie of Preaching is and hath bene much defaced in the eyes of many not so well settled: the one is, What need al this preaching? the other is, who know eith whō to beleene among these Preachers? These two demands were first hatched in hell, but since being cherished by Anabaptisticall and Popish spirits, and by them buzzed into the heads of vnlearned, vnstable, and irreligious people, they are brought unto a duellish perfection. Somewhat I can say out of mine owne experience, that through a conceit that these two questions (as they are pressed by some wily workemen) are unanswerable, our Ministry is drawne into contempt, and the calling of a Preacher is deemed of al other professions the most superfluous, and such as may well be spared without any preiudice to the well-being of Gods Church. The giuing answer to these bellish interrogatories, as it hath many times exercised me in the execution of my publike ministry, so it hath at this time drawne me to the compiling of this present Treatise: both that those of these parts, who to  
my*

3 Pet. 3, 16

## The Preface.

my knowledge haue need, and do desire it also, may haue something by them, whereupon aduisedly to deliberate for the settling of their iudgments, and that others likewise elsewhere, who (it may bee) haue experience of the like Satanicall encounters, may (instead of a better help) enioy the benefite of this that I haue laboured in. This is the maine occasion, this is my chiefe intent in this tractate: wherein, as I haue freely uttered that which I am perswaded is the truth, so will I be ready also either to alter or better my iudgement, if any man out of the worde of God shall offer to instruct mee: hauing learned this lesson, to teache what I know without grudging, and to learne that wherein I am ignorant without blushing, And though perhappes many know in this matter as much as I or any man can tell them, yet I am sure manye are ignorant, and therefore I may well maintaine my course with that sayinge of Augustine, it is better to giue him that hath, then to turn him away which hath not. It is meete that they which know should be wearied with many repetitions, then those which are unskilfull sent away empty for want of instruction. As for writers in our times, directly of this subiect I know none. If there be none, I wish there may be, for as the saying is,

*Adrianus dicitur  
Sonus, iudicatus  
distinguitur.  
Basil. Epist. i.  
ad Greg. Naz.*

*August. de bap  
contra Donat.*



## The Preface.

*Et: dicit, ut ait  
Apo.*

*Mox in pila  
vultus a yet.  
Theog.*

*Diuerso stylo  
non diuersam  
fide: Ang. in  
de Trinit. lib.  
8. cap. 3*

*Semetipsum  
laudare vani.  
vituperare,  
stulti est. La-  
ert de Arist.*

*Hieronym. ad  
Marcellinam.*

One man is no man : & by the more this truth is auouched, the better it is confirmed. If there be that haue laboured in this very kind wherein I now do, yet it can be no preiudice to my endenour. The auuncient proverbe is. that One bark canot bear al passengers: so neither can one author serue all men. Augustine held it as profitable, that of the same questions, many books should be made by sundry men in a differing stile, though not with a differing faith. All stomackes we see are not alike : One kind of dressing pleaseth one, which hath no relish with another : and yet the same meat ordered after some other fashion, may fit his apretite also. As there is a difference of stomackes, so of humors and dispositions in me. The same matter diuersly handled, may finde entertainment with diuers men: which yet digested after one onelie fashion, would haue acceptance but with few.

Touching the maner of writing, I will promise thee nothing more then ordinary: It is not for mee either to praise or discommend mine owne workes : the one were vanitie, the other folly. I submit all to thy iudgment. Onely this I say, somewhat to help my self: Hieroni saith there are two things requisite for diuinity-studies, Silence and Leisure. Of the lacke of both these

## The Preface.

these I may well complain. Household affaires, and the stirres occasioned by those busineses, cannot but breed distraction: and he which is exercised with the care of a congregation, shall meet with very seldome intermission. I intreat thee therefore, when thou shalt find me to faile in any thing (from which I account not my self priuileaged) impute it to this forenamed want: and hope thus of me, that if I had had more freedome and more time, all things shold haue bene brought to better perfection.

I haue troden in an old beaten path, both by old and new writers, by Diuines and Heathen, namely, to frame my matter to the forme of a Dialogue a very good way (in my seeming) to help the understanding of common men: I confesse it to haue eased mee much in writinge, I doubt not but it shall turne to thy benefite in reading also. Well, whatsoeuer it is (good Reader) thine it is: and being thine, I am comanded by him that may comānd vs al, not to withhold it frō thee. Receiue it therefore with the same hand with which it is deliuered to thee. Use it to thy comforte: and whatsoeuer good thou receiuest by it, let the glory be the Lords.

All that I desire of thee by way of recompence, is that thou be a suter to God on my behalfe, that with his preuenting and following mercy

vt praueniēte  
& subsequēte  
misericordia.

The Preface to the Reader.

*quacumque sci  
enda nescio do  
ceat me, in his  
que vera noui  
custodiat me,  
in quibus ut  
homo fallor cor  
rigat me. Ful-  
gen. ad Mon.  
lib. i.*

1 Thes. 5, 23

*in all needfull things which I know not, he would  
instruct me, in all truth which I do know he  
would uphold me, and in those things, wherein,  
as a man I haue failed, he would reforme me.*

*And the same God sanctifying vs both  
throughout, that our whole spirit, and  
soule, and body, may be kept blame-  
lesse. vnto the comming of our Lorde  
Jesus Christ. Farewell. Modbury in De-  
uon. 1. September, 1604.*

Thine in the Lord,

Sam: Hieron.





## ¶ *The Preachers Plea,*

Or a Treatise in forme of a plain dialogue, making known the worth and necessity of that which we call *Preaching*: shewing also how a man may profite by it, both for the informing of his Iudgement, and the reforming of his life.

*Epaphras* a Minister. *Nymphas* a priuat man.

*Nymphas.*

**S**Ir, vnlesse I do very much mistake, I haue often heard you in your publike sermons vrge the sufficiency that ought to be in a Minister, and especially for the clearing of doubtles and cases of conscience among those of whom the holy Ghost hath made him an overseer.

*Epaphras.* It is not vnlike, that among other pointes deliuered in the ordinarie ministrye, you haue receiued this also :  
for

Mal. 2, 7.

2 Pet. 2, 17

Psal. 115, 5  
Isay. 50, 4

for I am well aduised, that of old it was the appointment of God, that the Priests lips should preserve knowledge, and men should seeke it at his mouth. So that we all, as many as tender the good of the Church of Christ, haue cause to bewaile our countries estate, in which are so many Wells without water, as S. Peter testifieth them, and that not vntruly: for as a well placed by the way side, in regarde of the outwards seeming thereof, putteth the poore thirsty traoueller in hope of some refreshing; who repauntinge to it, and finding nothing but emptinesse, goeth on his waye with the greater discouragement: so these kind of men standinge in the Church of God do by reason of their outward habite & semblance of grauities, make the wearied, distressed & perplexed Christian conceiue, that if hee haue recourse to them he shall certainly bee relieved: but yet when he maketh triall, he findeth them to his greater grieve, not vnlike to the images of the Heathen, Which haue mouthes and speake not; not hauing the tongue of the learned that they should know how to minister a word in time to him that is weary. But tell me neigh

neighbors, I pray you, this being granted, what you would inferre hereupon?

*Nymphas.* Surely, that which I would inferre hereupon is this, that you being by your calling a Minister, are therefore able, and being also by the providence of God that Minister, yppon whose labours I must especially depend, are willing also to enter discourse with me, and to affoord me your best helpe for my better vnderstandinge in some points, wherein I haue of late dayes bene very much perplexed.

*Epaph.* For mine abilitie in this behalf, what it ought to be I know, and what I wish it to be, I know also; yet whatsoever it is, I shall be most willing (as my dutie is) to spend my time to bestow my labour and to employ my best endeouors in so holy a businesse as is your buildinge vp in knowledge and your futherance in the wayes of godlinesse. And I dooe heartily wish that both you and others of our neighbors, would more often give me the like occasion, I should then the better know your doubtles, and so fit my selfe to speake in preachinge to euery mans conscience, and you also should by that means be resolved in manye things  
which

The profit of  
conference,  
betwixt the  
Minister and  
his people.

Heb. 5, 14

which for lacks of conference must needs breed scruple, especially in those which haue not yet through long custome exercised wits to discerne both good and euill.

*Nymp.* I am not a litle glad to hear this from you: for to tell you the truth plainly without flattery, I haue heard some complaine of a certaine strangenesse in you and others of your coat, which they say hath discouraged them from aduenturing to confer with you.

*Epap.* That may bee but a pretence, & yet it will not altogeather excuse either others or my selfe herein: happily we bee not so tender ouer the wants of our people as we ought to be. Howsoeuer to preuent any such feare in you for this time, I pray you be bold to speake your minde freely, and you shall find me far from seeking weareye of you, or from giuinge you any occasion to thinke that I am unwilling to seeke to resoluue you (as I may) in any thing that may trouble you. And I pray God, the God of all grace, euen for Christs sake, so to blesse this our conference, by giuing to vs both a right iudgement in al things, that it may bee both to his glory, and to our further comfort.

*Nymph.*



*Nymp.* Amen. well then, because I doe  
eue long to acquaint you with that which  
hath (when I haue been by my selfe) much  
disquieted me, you shall vnderstande, that  
the occasion mouing mee at this time to  
craue your aduice, is this : since it pleased  
God to let the light of the glorious Gospel  
of his Sonne, by preaching to shine in these  
parts more clearely then in former yeares,  
it hath happened that I haue fallen into the  
companye, sometime of common men,  
sometime of men of better fashion, which  
in the world wee call wise men; sometime  
also of men of learning, and by profession  
Ministers : some of whome to my grieve I  
haue heard speake very disgracefully, some  
verye scornefully, all of them to the lesse-  
ning of that reuerent estimation which we  
ought to haue of the preachinge of the  
worde, and of the ordinary course thereof  
which is amongst vs:

The occasion  
of the whole  
Dialogue.

*Epaph.* It is not vnlike, neither yet  
indeed is it to be maruelled at, as though  
some strange thing were come vnto vs.  
The diuell knoweth by long experiente,  
that the preaching of the word is þe ruine  
of his kingdom, & that thereby he is made  
like lightning to fall downe from heaven. Luke 10, 18.

Resistance  
doth euer ac  
company the  
preaching of  
the truth.

And

2 Tim. 3, 8

Jude 14, 15

2 Pet. 2, 5

Math. 24, 39

Exod. 3, 14

And therefore it hath euer beene his practise, at the very first entrance of sincere preaching, to raise by some men of corrupt minds, to resist the truth, and to stop the happie proceedings of the Gospell. The firste Preacher mentioned in the Scripture is Enoch the seventh from Adam, together with the relation of whose doctrine, the text mentioneth also the ciuell speakings, & violent courses of wicked sinners against him. The next after him was Noah which was a Preacher of righteousness: and howsoever the story mentioneth expressly no tumultes raised by against him, yet it may easily bee gathered, in that hee preaching so many yeares before the comming of the flood, yet all that while wee doe not finde anye one to haue bene reclaimed, but they all continued in their accustomed securitie, and knew nothing till the flood came and tooke them all away. Passe from him to Moses, of whose resistance the story relateth many particulars: at his first undertaking anye authoritie amonge the people, in seekinge to end a strife betwixt them, he was taken vppen short with the common speech, VWho made thee a man of

of authoritie and a iudge ouer vs? After,  
 when he was sent backe into Egypt to  
 deliuer the people from the bondage of  
 Pharaoh, the story is a witnes how often  
 and openly he was gainesaid, sometimes  
 by the people, they murmuring at him;  
 sometimes by Iannes and Iambres two  
 Egyptians, sometimes by Korah and his  
 complices: so that though the Lorde  
 wrought mightily by Moses, yet hee had  
 daily experience of the malice of the wic-  
 ked against the truth. Now for the times  
 of the Prophets, one Ieremie may bee a  
 sufficient witnesse: he saith he heard the  
 railing of manie, and the word of the Lord  
 which hee preached was a reproach vnto  
 him, and in derision daily. If you examin  
 the times after Christ, at the first sprea-  
 ding of the Gospell, this will be more ap-  
 parant. Run through the book of the acts:  
 the preaching of Peter and Iohn was en-  
 tertained first w<sup>th</sup> mocking: afterwards  
 more open violence was vsed, & the men  
 in authority tooke it grieuously that they  
 taught the people. and by comon consent  
 put them to silence. Steuen was a man  
 full of faith and of the holie ghost, and they  
 were not able to resist the wisdom and

Exod. 5, 20

2. Tim. 3, 8  
Numb. 16.

Iere. 20, 8,  
10.

Acts. 2, 13

Acts. 4, 2.

Ver. 18.

**Acts. 6, 5, 9**  
10, 12.

**Acts. 13, 8**

**Acts. 14, 19**

**Acts. 19, 24**

**2 tim. 1, 15**

**& 2, 17.**

the spirit by which he spake, yet certaine arose euen of the sinagogue, and moued the people against him. Paul was mightily withstood, sometimes by Elymas the sorcerer, sometimes by the Jewes, sometimes by Demetrius and those of that faction, sometime by Phygellus and Hermogenes. otherwhiles by Hymeneus and Philetus. Thus we haue euen a clouds of witnesses, to confirme this, that it hath euer bin the diuels course by all meanes to withstand the preaching of the truth. And therefore maruell not, good neighbours, at it, when you see the like in these times: these are Satans old pranks, and he will thus bestirre himselfe to the end.

*Nymp.* Blessed bee God, you haue well satisfied me in this: so that I now see that those which loue the truth, haue cause to reioyce at it, rather then to bee dismayed when they shall see the outrage of the world, and the fury of carnall men against the publishing of the Gospell.

*Epaph.* You are not deceived: for the diuel his struggling on this wise, sheweth that there is a stronger then he come, to bind him, and to take his armour fro him. And though the oppositions of men are

at

at the first assault something troublesome,  
yet we haue euer cause to reioyce, when  
wee can say iustly, After this manner did Luk.6,13  
they to the Prophets.

*Nymp.* Yet sir, by your leaue, I cannot  
but maruell, that seeing the preaching of  
the word is so excellent a thing as it is, euē  
the power of God vnto saluation, men shoulde Rom.1,16  
notwithstanding so eagerly resist it, and  
shew themselves so great enemies vnto it.

*Epaph.* You wil cease to wonder, when  
you shal truly vnderstand the causes mo-  
uing worldlye and vnregenerate men to  
malice and maligne that, which indeede  
as you say, if the worth thereof were  
knowne, they ought rather with al reue-  
rence to embrace: and if you thinke that  
it may bee helpfull vnto you in that,  
wherein you desire to be resolved, I will  
open the same vnto you something more  
at large.

*Nymp.* You cannot content me better,  
then if you shall vndertake to discourse  
therof: for (as I suppose) when I haue once  
learned the true cause why preaching is so  
much misliked. I shall the lesse feare the  
pretenced reasons, which I daily heare to  
be alleaged against it.

Acts. 6, 5, 9  
10, 12.

Acts. 13, 8

Acts. 14, 19

Acts. 19, 24

2 tim. 1, 15

& 2, 17.

the spirit by which he spake, yet certaine arose euen of the sinagogue, and moued the people against him. Paul was mightily withstood, sometimes by Elinas the sorcerer, sometimes by the Jewes, sometimes by Demetrius and those of that faction, sometime by Phygellus and Hermogenes. otherwhiles by Hymeneus and Philetus. Thus we haue euen a clouds of witnesses, to confirme this, that it hath euer bin the diuels course by all meanes to withstand the preaching of the truth. And therefore maruell not, good neighbour, at it, when you see the like in these times: these are Satans old pranks, and he will thus bestirre himselfe to the end.

*Nymp.* Blessed bee God, you haue well satisfied me in this: so that I now see that those which loue the truth, haue cause to reioyce at it, rather then to bee dismayed when they shall see the outrage of the world, and the fury of carnall men against the publishing of the Gospell.

*Epaph.* You are not deceived: for the diuel his struggling on this wise, sheweth that there is a stronger then he come, to bind him, and to take his armour fro him. And though the oppositions of men are at

at the first assault something troublesome,  
yet we haue euer cause to reioyce, when  
wee can say iustly, After this manner did Luk.6,13  
they to the Prophets.

*Nymp.* Yet sir, by your leaue, I cannot  
but maruell, that seeing the preaching of  
the word is so excellent a thing as it is, euē  
the power of God vnto saluation, men shoulde Rom.1,16  
notwithstanding so eagerly resist it, and  
shew themselves so great enemies vnto it.

*Epaph.* You wil cease to wonder, when  
you shal truly vnderstand the causes mo-  
uing worldlye and vnregenerate men to  
malice and maligne that, which indeede  
as you say, if the worth thereof were  
knowne, they ought rather with al reue-  
rence to embrace: and if you thinke that  
it may bee helpfull vnto you in that,  
wherein you desire to be resolved, I will  
open the same vnto you something more  
at large.

*Nymp.* You cannot content me better,  
then if you shall vndertake to discourse  
therof: for (as I suppose) when I haue once  
learned the true cause why preaching is so  
much misliked. I shall the lesse feare the  
pretenced reasons, which I daily heare to  
be alleaged against it.



The causes  
of the dis-  
like of prea-  
ching.

The first  
cause.

1.kin.22,8

*unguis in  
vulnere.*

Ephc.5,13

*Epaph.* The true causes why the course of preaching, when it is performed so as it ought, is so much repined at, are these three especially. The first is this. As men love nothing more then their sinnes, so they loath nothinge more then the discovery thereof: they can by no meanes endure to haue their secret corruptions ript vp: it is a death vnto them to be thoroughly & directly dealt withal. Wicked Ahab hated the sincere Prophet of the Lord Michaiah, because he neuer prophesied good vnto him but euill; that is, he neuer spared him, but deliuered the truth of God vnto him plainly without flattery. Now the preaching of the word, it is as the prouerb is, The finger in the bile; it is euer rubbing vpon the gall: and being light, it maketh all things manifest and discloseth euery mans close and secret vngodlines. In the dayes of blindness (that is, in times and places where there is not a settled course of preaching) many a man seemeth to himselfe, and to others also to be vnreproueable, who when the light of the word by powerfull application breaketh out, is discovered both to others, & especially to his owne conscience,

conscience, to be nothinge lesse then that which he was supposed to be. Here is the one cause of dislike : the word thus handled, openeth that which men of all other things desire most to be concealed : so that it is true of the word of Christ, which he witnesseth of himselfe, The world hateth me, because I testifie thereof *Iohn. 7, 7* that the workes of it are euill Tell mee now I praye you, what thinke you of this ?

*Nymp.* Trulie I cannot but beare witness to the truth hereof out of mine owne experience. For howsoeuer, I haue now learned, I thank God, to saie with *Dauid*: *Pla. 141, 5* *Let the righteous smite mee, for that is a benefite ; let him reprove me, and it shall be a precious oyle that shall not breake my head :* yet I well remember, when I first heard preaching, I was many times discontented : me thought the Preacher was too peremptorie, and a great deale more plain then needed ; yea I had much ado at times, not to perswade my selfe that I was chiefly aimed at in some thinges, and that the Preacher had receiued some secret informations touching me and my demeanour, which he there opened in the pulpit, So harde a

thing is it for flesh and bloud to beare the words of reproofe, yea though in the witness of a mans owne conscience he hath euery way deserued the same. But I hartily beseech God on the behalfe of you and others of your sort, that he woulde enlarge your spirits, and *give utterance vnto you, that you maye open your mouthes boldlye to publish the secret of the Gospell.* For I thinke there were neuer anye daies of greater securitie, in which it is needfull that the men of God shoulde *lift vpp their voice like a trumpet, to shew the people their transgressions, and the house of Iacob their sins:* because indeede as it was said of old. *All the world sitteth still and is at rest.* And I wish vnfaignedly, that the seuerall watchmen in their particuler charges woulde remember that Item which the spirit of God giueth by *the Prophet, Yee that are mindfull of the Lorde keepe not silence.* But sir I am afraid I doe too much interrupt you, therefore I praye you proceede to shew the next reason of dislike.

Eph. 6. 19.

Isa. 58. 1

Zach. 1. 1, 11

Isa. 62. 6

*Epaph.* You haue saide the very truth. We can bee content to heare the worde untill it rife vs. But as a purging potiō, as long as it is in drinking, is but as  
other

other drinke vntill it worke, and then we could be content to cast it vp againe : so we can quietly heare the worde vntill it worke vpon vs, but then it seemeth a burden vnto vs. But to come to the opening of the second reason of the dislike of preaching : I haue by obseruation found it to bee this ; because preaching is (as men suppose) an enemy vnto liberty, a thinge which by nature euery man desireth to enioy. In the second Psalm we reade what is the opinion that men haue of Christian obedience, they call it bands & cords, that is to say, mere seruilitie and flauery, a base an ignominious thinge to be conformable. This is the very right conceipt which wordlinges haue of velding them selues vnto the doctrine of Christ Iesus. When Lot admonished y Sodomites, & bega to perswade with the to desist from violence against the strangers that were with him in his house ; they cried strait, Shal he iudge and rule ? Forthwith they began to repine against his godly aduise, as against a matter of too much tyzannie in Lot, and of too great subiection in themselves. It was the imputation of Korah and his adherentes to

The second  
cause of  
the dislike  
of preaching.

Psal. 2, 3

Gen. 19, 9

thing is it for flesh and bloud to beare the words of reproofe, yea though in the witness of a mans owne conscience he hath euery way deserued the same. But I hartily beseech God on the behalfe of you and others of your sort, that he woulde enlarge your spirits, and *giue utterance vnto you,*  
 Eph. 6. 19. *that you maye open your mouthes boldlye to publish the secret of the Gospell.* For I thinke there were neuer anye daies of greater securitie, in which it is needfull that the men of God shoulde *lift vpp their voice like a trumpet,*  
 Isa. 58. 1 *to shewe the people their transgressions, and the house of Iacob their sins:* because  
 Zach. 1. 11 *indeede as it was said of old. All the world sitteth still and is at rest.* And I wish vnfaignedly, that the seuerall watchmen in their particuler charges woulde remember that Item which the spirit of God giueth by *the*  
 Isa. 62. 6 *Prophet, Yee that are mindfull of the Lorde keepe not silence.* But sir I am afraid I doe too much interrupt you, therefore I praye you proceede to shew the next reason of dislike.

*Epaph.* You haue saide the very truth. We can bee content to heare the worde vntill it rife vs. But as a purging potio, as long as it is in drinke, is but as  
 other

other drinke vntill it worke, and then we could be content to cast it vp againe : so we can quietly heare the worde vntill it worke vpon vs, but then it seemeth a burden vnto vs. But to come to the opening of the second reason of the dislike of preaching : I haue by obseruation found it to bee this ; because preaching is (as men suppose) an enemy vnto liberty, a thinge which by nature euery man desireth to enioy. In the second Psalm we reade what is the opinion that men haue of Christian obedience, they call it bands & cords, that is to say, mere seruitie and flauery, a base an ignominious thinge to be conformable. This is the very right conceipt which wordlinges haue of velding them selues vnto the doctrine of Christ Iesus. When Lot admonished y Sodomites, & bega to perswade with the to desist from violence against the strangers that were with him in his house ; they cried Straite, Shal he iudge and rule ? Forthwith they began to repine against his godly aduise, as against a matter of too much tyrannie in Lot, and of too great subiection in themselves. It was the imputation of Korah and his adherentes to

The second  
cause of  
the dislike  
of preaching.

Psal. 2, 3

Gen. 19, 9

**Núm. 16, 3** Moses and Aaron, You take too much vpon you: they deemed the gouernment of Moses too peremptory, as an enemy to their libertie, & therefore not to be indured. When the Prophet Amos preached,

**Amo. 7, 10** it was said, that the land was not able to beare his words: as who should say, his sermons were too censorious: men that were of a liberall and free disposition, were not able to digest them. One reason which the Iewes had against Christ, to stir vp themselves to finde a meanes to suppress him, was, because they supposed that if they let him alone, The Ro-

**Ioh. 11, 48** manes would come and take awaie both their place and nation. They thought bondage would follow vpon his doctrine. This might easily bee enlarged with the additiō of many examples: but our owne experience may be a sufficient confirmation. For euen at this day the worlde maintaineth the same opinion of obedience and conformatie in Christian duties, that it is an abridgement to liberty, that it sauioreth of flauishnes & basenesse for a man at the words of a Preacher to be restrained.

*Nymp.* Truly sir it is euen so: for out  
of



of my poore experience I am able to witness thus much, that manie men imagine, that for them to liue without controlment, following the swaie of their owne affections, if they may sweare and blaspheme, and be vicious and riotous, and drink with the drunkard, and profane the Sabbath, and scoffe at zeale and sincerity in religion, and runne into all manner of excesse, this is libertie. On the other side, they repute the restraint from any of these things to be the greatest thraldome; a misery it is to be kept within compasse; that a man may not sweare, may not spend the Lordes daie in sportes, or in wordelie businesses, or in travelling vpon his owne occasions, that hee must set such a narrow watch before his mouth, as that there shoulde be no filthines nor foolish talking, nor iesting; that he should be tied to the continual hearing of the word, to often receiuing the sacrament and the like, this is a miserie of al miseries, a thing not to be endured: they crie when you tel them these things. *This is a hard saying, who can abide it?* and determine as those of whom you spake, *Let vs breake their bandes, and cast their cordes from vs.* But resolve me herin I pray ye sir, is this liberty?  
are

Are not men herein altogether mistaken?

*Epaph.* Yes verily for howsoever men thinke themselves iolly fellowes, because they can seeme to contemne all gouernemente, yet indeede of all conditions it is the basest, and of all thz aldoines the most slavish for a man to be subiect vnto sinne, to be giuen ouer to his owne lustes, to be ledde wholly by the corrupt affections of his own hart: and to say the trueth, euen in reason it must needs be so: for, as to be a slave and a bassall is in it selfe verie opprobrious, and such a thing as euen the nature of man doeth abhorre: so, the more vile he is to whom a man is in bondage, the more base and odious is it in the eyes of others, and the more tedious to himselfe if he be of any ingenuous disposition. Now what more vile thing can there be imagined then sinne is? What more abominable before God, what more dangerous to the soule of him that committeth it: so that sin being a thing so vile in how soeuer an estate is he, that is a slave and a bassal thereunto? Do you conceiue me in this?

*Nymp.* I conceiue you well. But yet this breeds a further doubt: wee maye all complaine

complaine with the Apostle, that we are euen captiue vnto the Law of sinne: who then is he that may be called a slaue of sinne? Rom. 7, 23

*Epaph.* Our Saviour shall make you answer: He that committeth sinne, is the seruant of sinne: to which, to make it more plaine you may adde the saying of the Apostle, Knowe ye not that to whom soeuer you giue your selues as seruantes to obey, his seruantes you are to whom you obey? The latter place is an expositiō to y<sup>e</sup> other. He (saith Christ) that committeth sinne, is the seruant of sinne: he committeth sinne (saith Paul) that obeyeth sinne: now he is said to obey sinne, who finding his corrupt heart to prouoke him to any thing, sets himself presently to performe the same, as the holy Ghost speaketh, taketh thought for the flesh to fulfill the lustes thereof. John 8, 34  
Rom. 6, 16  
Rom. 13, 14. So the adulterer is a slaue to his sinne, because he is wholly at the commaunde thereof, studying howe to compass the same, and to satisfie his vn-cleane desires to the vttermost. The Drunkarde is a vassall to his sinne, because it is as it were his businesse, to set himselfe to the committing of it, to get money to bestow vpon it, to gather company

pany that he may haue fellowes in it, to rise early to follow it, to make his bodye able to beare it. The quietous person is a Iudge to his money: for, for t he will do any thing, he will defeat one, and defraud another, and oppresse a third, and grinde the fourth, and take vsury of the fift, and rake and wring, and extort, and lie and forswear, and whatsoeuer else for his money. He is such a seruant to it, as the Centurions seruants were to him: If money say to him, Go, he trudgeth by and by: if it say Come, it hath him at a becke: if it bid him do this, be it neuer so vile, vnjust or vniustfull, eittson he doth it. In like maner the continuall gambler, is as it were in the state of villenage to his humour, he will neglect all other occasions, either of rest for his bodie, or of profite for his outwarde estate, or of religion for his soules good, to fulfill it: for his life (if companie be for him hee is not able to forbear it. In like sort, the ignorant man is in bondage to his blindness: for bringe all the perswasions you can against it out of the word of God, yet ignorance shall still haue the vpper hande, either he will not conceiue you, or he will  
not

not believe you, or he will not be directed by you. So againe, the superstitious is in thraldome to his owne pœuishment; for let God commaund what he wil, or prescribe what forme of worship he thinketh good, yet, thus and thus it hath beene so long, and so it shall be, and so wil I do for euer. In a worde, whosoever suffereth himselfe to bee led by the corruption of his owne heart in any thing, without making resistance, without desiring the assistance of Gods spirit to withstand it, whether it be pride, malice, reuenge, or whatsoeuer else, the same is a slave to his sinne a drudge to his owne humour, and the basest creature vnder heauen. Nay he is more slavish by degrees, then those slaves, whō they vsed in old times (and as they doe still in some countries) to buy with money, and to vse at their pleasure. For there is no such slave, but he keepeth a free mind in a seruile estate: but men generally, being in this most filthy and wretched thraldome, thinke themselves to be in the most happy estate that may be, and have no will nor disposition to be fræde, but are enemies to the meanes of their deliery. Thus haue I  
shew

Gen. 9, 15.

shewed you, that though men thinke themselves at libertie when they may liue licenciously, yet they are much deceiued: it may be said of them as Noah said of Canaan: seruantes of seruantes they be, doing the businesse of the diuell, not grudgingly or vnwillingly as bond slaves vsually do, but readily, greedily, and ioyfully.

Gal. 5, 13

*Nymp.* I am (I thanke you) well satisfied for this: yet by the way giue mee leaue to demaund of you one thing, doeth not Paul say to Christians, *Brethren ye haue bene called into libertie*: so that it seemeth there is liberty euen in Christianity, which what it is (if any such be) I pray you to instruct me.

*Epaph.* Certainly the state and calling of a true christian, is a louely calling, a calling that calleth me vnto it, such a calling as that the beames thereof are able to reach vnto the eie. True it is, that euer since Adam did eate the forbidden fruite, all the mouthes of his posterity are so out of taste, that we can neither heare nor see, nor taste any thing that good is; so that if wee looke vpon the estate of a Christian liuing in obedience, with an eie of flesh,  
it

it looketh euē like Christ for al the world,  
euen as a withered branch, and like a root  
in the dry ground; when we see it, there is Isay, 53, 1  
no forme that we shou'd desire it. The eye  
of a natural man can see no good in it, but  
lesse it be good to cleaue vnto the Lord, or  
it is good to bee afflicted, or it is good to  
run the way of Gods commandements,  
and such like, which are like pilles, and  
to die for it, will not downe with a car-  
nall man; yet if it be duly considered, it is  
the onely estate of libertie. It is not a  
fleshy libertie, a libertie for men to doe  
and speake, and liue as they themselves  
please, every man after his owne fashio,  
as though the reines should be layed on  
every mans neck, and he left to his owne  
disposition. It is no such libertie, for then  
the more Libertine the better Christian,  
and then all the worlde woulde sone bee  
religious, for al the world are wel neare  
Libertines. But this libertie which  
Christians haue, is a spirituall libertie  
a heavenly libertie, a libertie of the soule:  
not which giueth the body libertie from  
obedience, but which setteth the soule at  
liberty from destruction: not which ma-  
keth vs free to sin, but which setteth vs  
free



free to serue God : not which giueth a man leaue to liue as caringe for none, but which maketh him by loue a seruant vnto all : a freedome it is from the bondage of Satan, from the thralldom of sin, from the heauie curse of Gods law, giuing an interest into Gods saueur, into the merits of christ, into the felicity of the chosen, into the eternal inheritance of Gods kingdome. This is the libertie of Christians, of which howsoeuer worldly men (which saue only of erthly things) may iudge, yet such it is and so great, & hath so many priuiledges annexed thereunto, as that all the enfranchisements and freedomes of this worlde are not worthe therewith to be compared. For as the new Ierusalem, which is from aboue, is of all other Citties and incorporations the most glorious, so it is the greatest priuiledge that any man can attaine, to be, of a stranger and a forreiner, admitted to be a cittizen and free denizen of that societie. Thus at your request I haue giuen you a taste of the doctrine of Christian Libertie : the obedient Christian is the true free-man, euen the Lordes free-man.

*Nymp.*

*Nymph.* Doubtlesse this is a most excellent pointe, and to the soule of a Christian exceeding comfortable: howe much therefore are we bound to giue thanks to our heavenly Father, whoe hath deliuered vs from the power of darkenesse, and hath translated vs into the kingedome of his deare Sonne. *Col. 1, 12, 13.*  
And I beseech God giue vs the grace, that beeing thus made free from sinne, wee may become the seruantes of righteousness: that so hauing our fruite in holinesse, the ende may bee everlasting life. *Rom. 6, 18 Ver. 22.* But nowe if it please you, I long to heare the thirde cause of the small regard of Preaching.

*Epaph.* The third cause of contemptuous resistance, is the iudgeing of that which is taughte by the outwarde semblaunce of the teacher: as for example: Some great man in the world, that happily is a Magistrate, or a man of note and speciall reckoning in the place where hee lieth, comming to the Church, and hearing his sinne reproued, and such and such duties perswaded strait he casteth his eye vppon the person of the speaker, and him he saeth to be but some ordinarie man, one that if he shoulde come in place where he is, should be serued as the poore  
C man

The third  
cause of  
the dislike  
of preaching.

James 2.

man in the tozne coate, of whom S. James speaketh, that shoulde bee bidden to stand there also & off, or sitte here at my footstole; e. t. wone, he beginneth to thinke with himselfe, that it woulde be a shame for him to suffer the wordes of such a one so far below him in the world, to carry so great authoritie with him, as that hee shoulde by and by conforune himselfe to his perswasions. Another perhaps, that hath had some good education, and thereby hath gotten some tast of learning, or is otherwise by obseruation & experience growne to bee a man of some reach and capacitie: he when he compareth himselfe with y<sup>e</sup> teacher, seemeth to see as much (if not more) learning, iudgement, reading and understanding in himselfe as in him: and therefore he sayth with himself, Why shoulde I yelde to his instruction? Why should his opinion sway so far with me, as to drawe me from mine owne courses? why should not I be as wel able to iudge what is meete as hee? A thirde, that is (it may bee) some gallant, a man of spirit, that thinketh it a parte of his courage to bee without feare even of God himselfe, hee hearing at a sermon threat-

threatnings denounced against sin, and against those very sins wherof his life is a continuall practise, in the greatnesse of his stomacke, and in the prophanesse of his heart, beginneth to let all at nought, imagining that it cannot stand with that hardinesse and vndaunted resolution which he professeth, to be stricke with the words of a silly man, or to haue his heart terrified with a few idle speeches. In a word, the people generally do not consider how well a thing is spoken, how sufficiently proued, how soundly seconded and made good by the worde, this neuer enterreth into their thought: but they see that he which preacheth, what is hee but a man of their owne sort, one neither armed with authority to punish them, nor endued with power to constraine them, neither yet furnished with wealth to contend with them: and that all his force lyeth in his tongue, the exercise whereof when it is once past, there is all that hee can do, and therefore they make a Tush at his doctrine, and say of the Preacher *Icre. 5, 12.* as they did of old, He is but winde, and what is he that he should commaund vs? Thus, this also is one cause of resistance

to the holy doctrine taughte, men loke no higher then the man, and they value all that is. sayde by the quality of the speaker.

*Nymph.* This discourse of yours, so fully discovering the proud conceits of an vnreformed hart, calleth to my mind the commendation which Paul giueth of the Thessalonians, *When ye receiued of vs* (saith *1 Th. 2, 13* hee) *the worde of the preaching of God, ye receiued it not as the worde of men, but as it is indeede the worde of God:* for so long as men haue no higher a conceipt of that which they heare, then that it is but a mans doctrine, the respecte vnto it cannot choose but be verie small; so that I must needes yeelde vnto you in this, that this also may well go among the number of the causes why preaching is of so slender estimation heere amongest vs. Yet sir, men that are enemies in this case, do pretend other reasons, and will not be knowne of any of these to bee the occasion or cause of their dislike.

*Epaph.* That is most true, for sinne doeth euer seeke shades, and it is a trickes which we haue learned of our grandfather Adam, to sew figge-leaues together to couer our nakednesse. For shame men will

*Gen. 3, 7.*

will not say that they are hereby moued to dislike: yet notwithstanding these be the true grounds and men in their consciences know it to be so. If a man had asked of Pashur why he smote Ieremie the Prophet, and put him in the stocks, no Ier. 20, 9. doubt but hee woulde tell you a very small tale, as that, He prophesied against cha. 26, 11 the citie: he hath not sought the wealth of the people, but the hurt: and that hee discouraged the hands of the men of warre, in speaking such wordes vnto them. This would be Pashurs pretence, thus he wold pleade for his straitte courses against the poore Prophet, yet this is but a colour: for the very matter is, Ieremie was a little too bolde, he spake too plaine, his sermons were like a fire, and like a hammer that breaketh the stone, he kept not a Ier. 23, 29 word backe of all that the Lord commaunded him.

*Nymp.* Indeede I haue hearde much spoken by many, and diuers exceptions made against preaching, but I neuer heard any man acknowledge his dislike to proceede from any of these causes which you haue named: I wish therefore that you wold instruct me how to stop the mouths

of gain-sayers, when I light into the company of such. They will not perhaps say much to your faces that are Preachers but such as I am shall often heare them talke at liberty, and vtter the very bottom of their stomackes, and spend all their powder and shot to the beating downe of that which I hope they shall neuer bee able to ouerthrow.

*Epaph.* Assure your selfe of that : for we may be bolde to say in the comfort of  
 2 kin. 6, 16 a good conscience, They that bee with vs, are more then they hat be with them And when we come on the same errand with Ieremie, why may we not hope vpon the same promise, They shal fight againt thee  
 Iere. 1, 19. but they shall not preuaile againt thee, for I am with thee to deliuer thee saith the Lord: yet notwithstanding, lest their conceits should bee any hindrance to those that are well affected, or it shoulde be an encouragement to them in their euill, when they find those that seeme contrary minded vnable to answer them, therefore I do both commend your care herein, and will be as helpfull to you as I am able, in opening the vanitie of their seuerall exceptions, that are enemies vnto preaching.

*Nymp.*



*Nymp.* I thanke you for it : and I trust that he which commanded *Peter* when he was himselfe conuerted, to strengthen the brethren, will both blesse your care to my profite, and render to you seuen fold into your bosome, the comfort that I shall receiue by your aduice. I will be bold therefore, as farre as I can cal to mind, to make knowne vnto you euery thing that I haue heard objected in this case. luk. 22, 32

*Epaph.* Be so, I pray you, and faile not till you be fully satisfied, to bzge euery thing to the uttermost.

*Nymp.* You know sir, that we haue in our countrie, men of diuers humours, and sundrie fashions, some grossely ignorant, and meere sottish, chiefly in matters of religion; some prophane, such as *Esau* was, who care more for a portion of meate, esteeme more of a worldly comoditie, then of a heauenly treasure; some wise and sensible, as the world calleth wisdome; some learned also, and schollers by profession: now it hath bene my hap at some one time or other, to fall into conference with euery of these sorts, and as communication draweth in one thing after another, so to find out their seuerall opinion. and though some

The seuerall excepters against preaching.

heb. 12, 16

some of the be verie simple, and to be called idle surmises, rather the grounded reasons, yet because you haue made mee so kind an offer, you shall therefore haue all.

*Epaph.* Be it so, I am well contented : and because Ignorance is a mother sin, therefore let vs first heare I pray you the ignorant mans exceptions.

The ignorant peoples exceptions against preaching.

*Nymp.* One thing that I haue hearde some ignorant men with vs alleage, is, that they can see no reason why there shoulde be more vse of preaching now, then there hath bene in former times. They haue liued (they saie) some thirtie, some fortie, some more years without a settled ministerie, hauing onelie (vnlesse it were now or then at times) the ordinarie seruice read amonge them; and all this while they felt no want of that which is now called teaching, and therefore they are minded not to esteeme that much, for the remainder of their life, without which they haue liued and done well enough hitherto. How like you this sir? is not this a profound reason? Is not here good Diuinitie?

*Epaph.* Indeepe you may well call this the ignorant mans reason, it is so grosse, hauing in it but three errours, which

which you know is nothing to speake of in so short an allegation. First of all, they will neglect preaching now, because they haue liued without it hitherto: as though it were wisdomē for a man in his old or middle age, to refuse a kindnesse offered, because in his youth or childhood hee had no meanes to enioy it. Had it bene a good reason for Paul, when Christe called him from heauen, to haue said, *¶* Sir it is now too late, I am a man that haue spent the best part of my time without the knowledge of thee & of thy religion, & therefore I pray thee trouble me not now, I hope to shift out as well for so much of my life as is behind, as I haue done to this day. No man will be so without common sense, as to say, that Paul might iustly haue refused vpon such a pretence: and yet it had bin as good a reason as theirs. Secondly they erre in this, in that they account the time of their ignorance to haue bin without danger, because they neuer saw the danger. Alas litle do they consider the extreme misery of those times. Christ saith

Iohn. 12. 35

he

Ephes. 4, 18

Ephes. 2, 2

Ephes. 5, 14

Ezech. 18, 31

Acts. 2, 40

he is euen in the valley of the shadow of death, a stranger from the life of God, walking after the courſe of this world, & after the prince that ruleth in the ayre, euen the ſpirit that worketh in the children of diſobedience. A man that hath beene in a ſwound, and is awaked out of it by the paines of his friends he will tel you how pleaſing the ſlumber thereof ſeemed to his ſenſes, and at the firſt beginning to be awaked, he will ſay perhaps, You ſhoulde haue let me alone, why did you trouble me? But when he is better aduiſed, hee wil thank them that brought him again, becauſe he knoweth, that if he had beene let alone, it might haue coſt him his life. So in this caſe, a man living in blindenes and groſſe ignozance, ſeemeth to himſelfe for the preſent to be in a maruellous good eſtate, and his ſoule in as good caſe as any mans: and when the Preacher ſhall cry vnto him, Awake thou that ſleepeſt, and ſtand vp from the dead: O thou ignozant perſon, Why wilt thou dy? ſaue thy ſelf from this froward generation. Like enough he wil ſay O O. Preacher, trouble me not I pray you, ſpare your ſides, I am well enough, my ſoule is in  
no

no such danger: but if the Lord once open his eyes, and make him a new heart and a new spirit then he will blesse God for him that called him, because he will then perceiue, that otherwise he had euen runned on to his owne destruction. He that trauelleth by night vpon the edge and hanging of a steep hil, from which if he should fall he must needs breake his neck, goeth on without feare, because in the darke he seeth not the danger: but let him be brought back at light of day, it will make him euen quake to thinke vpon the perill he was in, & wonder that euer he shoulde escape it. In like sort, he that is in the blindnesse of ignorance without y word, the same is hourly ready to fall into the pit of hell: yet he feareth it not, because he seeth it not: but if euer he haue any remorse by the light of the Gospell shining in his hart, it will terrifie him to remember his former misery, and make him bely to tremble to consider it: so that here is the second errour in this ignorant objection. When conclude there was no danger in the dayes of blindnesse, because they saw no danger, whereas indeede the danger was so much the greater.

A

Iohn. 15, 22.

A third error there is yet in this excepti-  
 on, & that is, that they consider not how  
 that the refusall of Gods mercy which is  
 freely offered in the preaching of  $\text{h}$  word,  
 doth double their sinne, and make their  
 condemnation more iust by whom it is  
 refused. If I had not come and spoken vnto  
 them, they should not haue had sin, (saith  
 our Saviour) that is, they had not bene  
 chargeable with this sinne of contempt  
 of me and of my doctrine : But now haue  
 they no cloke for their sin, now they haue  
 nothing to plead for excuse. If this were  
 duly thought vpon that the neglect of the  
 worde, when the meanes of making the  
 same familiar vnto them is become com-  
 men among them, did make them guilty  
 of a greater sin before God, men would  
 then not dare like the deafe Adder to stop  
 their eares, and to suffer the holy doctrine  
 of God to fall to the ground vnregarded.  
 Thus I hope I haue shewed the vnrea-  
 sonableness of this first reason.

*Nymp.* This that you haue spoken,  
 as it maketh me see plainly the idlenesse of  
 this ignorant exception, so it calleth to my  
 remembrance a notable place of scripture,  
 which I once heard you alleage in one of  
 your

your sermons to this or the like purpose :  
it is a parte of paule his speech at Athens,  
The time of this ignorance (saith hee) God *Acte. 17, 30.*  
lightly passing over, now he admonisheth all men  
euerywhere to repent. It seemeth to mee that *W. 10. 11.*  
this place may be applied hitherto this mat-  
ter.

*Epaph.* It is well remembred : for  
indeede that speech fitteth well with this  
point. Paul there disputing with the hea-  
then that worshipped dumbe idols, and  
thought the Godhead to be like golde or  
siluer or stone, grauen by the art and in-  
uention of man least they shoulde obiect  
noueltie vnto him, and should say as the  
Papists do at this day, how was it possi-  
ble that all the world should for so manie  
yeares be deceiued : he telleth them that  
it seemed good vnto God, for causes best  
knowne vnto himselfe, to permit the ig-  
norance of so many thousands of yeares,  
yet so, as that time of blindness bee-  
ing now determined, men shoulde not  
pleade prescription, reckoning more of  
an old error the of newly reuealed truth :  
but should open their eares and hartes to  
this his generall summon to repentance.  
I thank you for minding me of this place :  
it



it sheweth notably what a sonde thing it is, not to take notice of the trueth reuealed, but to preferre a long continued ignorance befoze it. Haue you any more exceptions of this nature, forged in the shop of ignorance: like enough you haue: for it is an old and a true saying, that error is infinite though trueth be but one. If this that you haue named haue any moe fellows bring them forth; I doubt not, but by the grace of Christ to discountenance them.

*Nymp.* Yes sure: when the multitude heare it taught, that the preaching of the word is a thing of that nature and necessarie vse that without it men ordinarily cannot be saued. they cry out by and by: And what is then become of our forefathers? they had no preaching, yet they were in their times good people, honest, and well esteemed in the places where they liued. If we shoulde then yeelde to this, that this preaching, is with so reuerent a regarde to be depende vppon, we must needes condemne our progenitors out of whose loyns we are come, which to do were more then inhumanitie. I can tell you sir. this is an argument that hath a generall approbation,  
and

and therefore I pray you looke well to it that you can answer it.

*Epaph.* Well, as hard as it is yet it is *Iudg. 14, 12.* not so intricate as was Sampsons riddle, that in seauen dayes coulde not be interpreted, for indeede it is of no value. It is true, we are both by nature and by religion to honoꝝ the memorizes of our ancestors and in all good thinges to be imitators of them: but in matters of religion we are not to haue an eye to them oꝝ to their tines, but we must consider what it is which the Lorde requireth at our handes. Whether they were saued oꝝ no, it is not for vs to enquire: if the Lorde haue dealte moze mercifull with vs then he did with them, we haue cause to magnifie his holy name, to looke to our selues that wee despise not the riches of his bountie, and to leaue them to the Lorde to whome they stand oꝝ fall. It is a good saying of an auncient father to this purpose: If my predecessours (saith he) either by ignorance or by simplicitie haue not kept and holden that which our Lord hath taught them by his example and authority, the mercie of our lord might pardon them. But as the good Doctor saith. We cannot hope

*Cyp. lib. 2. ep. 3*

it sheweth notably what a sonde thing it is, not to take notice of the trueth reuealed, but to preferre a long continued ignorance before it. Haue you any more exceptions of this nature, forged in the shop of ignorance? like enough you haue: for it is an old and a true saying, that error is infinite though trueth be but one. If this that you haue named haue any more fellows bring them forth; I doubt not, but by the grace of Christ to discountenance them.

*Nymp.* Yes sure: when the multitude heare it taught, that the preaching of the word is a thing of that nature and necessarie vse that without it men ordinarily cannot be saved. they cry out by and by: And what is then become of our forefathers? they had no preaching, yet they were in their times good people, honest, and well esteemed in the places where they liued. If we shoulde then yeelde to this, that this preaching, is with so reuerent a regarde to be depende vppon, we must needs condemne our progenitors out of whose loynes we are come, which to do were more then inhumanitie. I can tell you fir. this is an argument that hath a generall approbation, and

and therefore I pray you looke well to it  
that you can answere it.

*Epaph.* Well, as hard as it is yet it is Iudg. 14, 12.  
not so intricate as was Sampsons riddle,  
that in seauen dayes coulde not be inter-  
preted, for indede it is of no value. It is  
true, we are both by nature and by reli-  
gion to honoꝝ the memoꝛies of our aun-  
cestoꝝ and in all good thinges to be imi-  
tatoꝝ of them: but in matters of religion  
we are not to haue an eye to them oꝝ to  
their times, but we must consider what  
it is which the Lorde requireth at our  
handes. Whether they were saued oꝝ no,  
it is not for vs to enquire: if the Lorde  
haue dealte moze mercifull with vs then  
he did with them, we haue cause to mag-  
nifie his holy name, to looke to our selues  
that wee despise not the riches of his  
bountie, and to leaue them to the Lorde  
to whome they stand oꝝ fall. It is a good  
saying of an auncient father to this pur-  
pose: If my predeceffours (saith he) either Cyp. lib. 2. ep. 3.  
by ignorance or by simplicitie haue not  
kept and holden that which our Lord hath  
taught them by his example and authority,  
the mercv of our lord might pardon them.  
But as the good Dctoꝝ saith. We cannot  
hope

hope for the like, hauing better meanes of instruction. When the outward ordinary meanes failed, Gods hand was not shortned, but hee was able euen in the middest of blindnesse to saue those which belonged to the election of grace. As for vs, it shall not bee safe for vs to neglect this so great saluation, or to receiue the grace of God in vaine, foolishly aduenturing our selues vpon the unknowne condition of our forefathers. And this I hope may suffice to take away the edge of this fancy. It is humanity to thinke the best of our forefathers, but it is diuinitie to looke carefully to our selues.

Heb. 2, 3  
2 Cor. 6, 1.

*Nymp.* I am glad you haue furnished me with so sufficient an answer to this exception which I haue bene often assaulted with; and indeed because of the common instinct of nature, it striketh the deeper impression, and is the more hardly remoued. But I thinke this that you haue saide may preuaile there, where obstinate willfulnes hath not gotten the mastery: and therefore  
1 Sam. 21, 9. I will lay this vp as safely as euer *Goliath* his sword was layed vp, that I may euer haue it in a readinesse for such a purpose. But sir there are yet more obiections of the same  
stampe,

stampe, which I must entreate you also to cleare, that so you may make me a perfect scholler in this point.

*Epaph.* Who would think it possible that men so dull and vncapable in matters which concerne their greatest good, shoulde be abounding with arguments wherewith to pleade euen against their owne soules? But the diuell is a cunning instructor, and laboꝛeth to strengthen men in ignozance (because it is the scepter of his kingdome) as much as it is possible. Let vs heare therefore what the ignozante, with whom it hath bene your hap to conuerse, haue yet further to alleage.

*Nymphas.* They say that the most learned of you all, who are called Preachers, when you haue shewed the vttermoste of your cunning, can say no more then they know alreadie? namely, that they must loue God aboue all, and their neighbours as themselves: and seeing they know this well enough alreadie, what needeth (say they) any more instruction.

*Epaphras.* This is a conceipte scarce worthy the confuting: yet lest my silence shoulde bꝛeade an opinion in you, that  
D there

there is more in it then indeede there is ;  
do but consider of it by the like : If a man  
speaking of husbandry, and hearing a-  
nother to discourse of the great skill and  
long experience that is requisit to make  
a man a good husband, shoulde say by and  
by, Tush, what talke you so much of skill  
and knowledge herein ? Why ? It is no-  
thing but this, to plowe, to sowe, and to  
reape : shoulde not such a one deservedly  
bee laughed at, and bee a scozne to those  
which heare him ? Yes, and not without  
cause : for euerye man knoweth, that  
though this be the sum of husbandry, yet  
there are diuers particulars belonging  
to these, which are neither soone learned  
nor easily practised : so that hee who de-  
sireth to be a good husband, and to profit  
by his labors, and to make the best of e-  
nery thing, must not satisfie himselfe to  
know this, that there is nothing in hus-  
bandry but to eare the land, and to reape  
the fruite, but he must learne also what  
belongeth to the right performace of  
these, otherwise hee may erre in sowing,  
playe the foole in plowinge, and come  
short in reaping. And euen so it is in this  
case : true it is, that the summe of all re-  
ligion



ligion consisteth in this, in louing God  
aboue all, and a mans neighbor as him-  
selfe : but what then ? If a man shall  
thinke by and by that hee is a good Chri-  
stian, and knoweth enough, because hee  
apprehendeth these generals, the same  
is exceedingly deceiued, for there are  
many other branches belonging to eache  
of these, which vnlesse a man doe knowe,  
hee can neuer loue God as hee ought,  
nor his neighbor as hee shoulde : so that  
to my seeming, euen common reason is  
sufficient to conuince mens ignorance  
hærcin. There is not the meanest pro-  
fession, the coursest trade, the plainest oc-  
cupation, but it hath (as wee say) a cer-  
taine mystery in it, there are manye  
rules belonging to it : which must bee  
knowne, not in grosse onely, but euen  
very precisely, before a man can in anye  
mediocritie practise the duties of the  
same,

*Nymphas.* It is true that you say,  
for mine owne parte I confesse it : but  
yet Ignorance will replye and say, VVill  
you then vrge vpon euery common man  
the knowledge of euery pointe which in  
preaching you deliuer ? that seemeth verie

there is moze in it then indeede there is ;  
do but consider of it by the like : If a man  
speaking of husbandry, and hearing a-  
nother to discourse of the great skill and  
long experience that is requisit to make  
a man a good husband, shoulde say by and  
by, Tush, what talke you so much of skill  
and knowledge herein ? Why ? It is no-  
thing but this, to plowe, to sowe, and to  
reape : shoulde not such a one deservedly  
bee laughed at, and bee a scozne to those  
which heare him ? Yes, and not without  
cause : for euerye man knoweth, that  
though this be the sum of husbandry, yet  
there are diuers particulars belonging  
to these, which are neither sone learned  
nor easily practised : so that hee who de-  
sireth to be a good husband, and to profit  
by his labors, and to make the best of e-  
nery thing, must not satisfie himselfe to  
know this, that there is nothing in hus-  
bandry but to eare the land, and to reape  
the fruite, but he must learne also what  
belongeth to the right performace of  
these, otherwise hee may erre in sowing,  
playe the fowle in plowinge, and come  
short in reaping. And even so it is in this  
case : true it is, that the summe of all re-  
ligion

ligion consisteth in this, in louing God  
aboue all, and a mans neighbor as him-  
selfe: but what then? If a man shall  
thinke by and by that hee is a good Chri-  
stian, and knoweth enough, because hee  
apprehendeth these generals, the same  
is exceedingly deceiued, for there are  
many other branches belonging to eache  
of these, which vnlesse a man doe knowe,  
hee can neuer loue God as hee ought,  
nor his neighbor as hee shoulde: so that  
to my seeming, euen common reason is  
sufficient to conuince mens ignorance  
hærcin. There is not the meanest pro-  
fession, the courtest trade, the plainest oc-  
cupation, but it hath (as wee say) a cer-  
taine mystery in it, there are manye  
rules belonging to it: which must bee  
knowne, not in grosse onely, but euen  
very precisely, before a man can in anye  
mediocritie practise the duties of the  
same,

*Nymphas.* It is true that you say,  
for mine owne parte I confesse it: but  
yet Ignorance will replye and say, VVill  
you then vrge vpon euery common man  
the knowledge of euery pointe which in  
preaching you deliuer? that seemeth verie

vnreasonable : neither can men that wante the helpes of learning attaine vnto it, and will not a good meaning make a suply for all this ?

*Epaphras.* How vnreasonable it may seeme in mennes eyes to be vrged to such exact knowledge, I cannot tel : this I am sure of, that we that are Ministers, are charged to shewe the people the whole counsell of God, and not to keepe a worde backe. If we cannot be dispensed with to keepe secret any thing, how shal it be tolerated in the people to neglect the knowledge of that, which we are bound by vertue of our commission to deliuer ? It was but an idle prayer of the Apostle, on the behalfe of the Colossians, to begge of God that they might be fulfilled with knowledge of Gods will, in all wisdom and spiritual vnderstanding : or for the Philipians, that they might abounde in all iudgement, and discern things that differ. I say these were but idle wishes, if so be, that full measure of knowledge is not required of euery Christian. And if some certaine rudiments, and as it were shreds of knowledge were sufficient, the Hebrews might well haue complained of wronge,  
in

Act. 20, 17  
Ier. 26, 2

Col. 1, 9

Phil. 1, 9,  
10.

in that they were so sharply censured for their being dull of hearing, and for that they still after so much teaching needed the first principles of the word of God. And sure, if it be unreasonable to urge men to knowe so much, wee must (which were blasphemie) challenge the wise God as an unnecessary burdener of mankind, who hath revealed so much. As it is curiositie to enquire into that which God hath concealed, so it is unthankfulnesse not to take notice of whatsoever he hath left written for our learning. The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to vs and to our children for ever, sayth the Scripture. I confesse, that if a man mighte attaine to the age of Methuselah, who lived nine hundred sixtie and nine yeares, and should in that space equall his diligence in searching the scripture vnto Dauid, who made it his meditation continually, yet many things woulde escape him, and he should when he had done all, be faine to confesse, that the greatest parte of that which he knoweth, is not the least parte of that which he knoweth not: but what then? because a man when he hath done

Heb. 5, 11.  
12.Rom. 15, 4  
deu. 29, 29

Gen. 5, 17

Psal. 119,  
97.

best cannot know all, shall hee therefore not labour to know any thing? God forbids. Ignorance by a kinde of necessitye may seeme to haue some excuse, but a voluntary neglect of that which a man may know, cannot haue so much as a colour of allowance.

*Nymphas.* Yet mee thinkes it is hard for the common people ( the greatest parte whereof cannot so much as reade) to attaine to so much knowledge as you seeme to perswade, especially if withall they be such as liue by their labour, and haue charge of children, how shal they spare time for such occasions?

*Epaph.* Verily it is a woefull thinge to consider the dulnesse that is amongst men: and they doe not know what they want that cannot reade ( a thing which notwithstanding, of all other the parts of learning is the most easie, and as sone learned as to be able to play at the cards, if men were as desirous of the one as of the other ); yet howsoeuer, in this case of knowledge in religion men do cast manie mo perils then they need, and are like the slouthfull man of whom Salomon speaketh, who saith, A lion is without, I shall be flaine

slaine in the streete. For knowlodge is easie to him that will vnderstande: and the yoke of Christ, it is easie, and his burden light: wherefore serueth the scripture but to giue vnto the simple sharpnesse of wit, and to the child knowledge and discretio? The entrance into thy words (saith Dauid) sheweth light: as soone as a man in humilitie, and in a true desire to knowe God, doeth but begin to apply himielse to the meanes of knowledge, hee shall secretly seele such a sodaine light cast in vpon his vnderstanding, that he shall be able to apprehend euen the verie secret of the Lord and the grea mistery of godlinesse, and so shall go from strength to strength, vntill hee bee filled with all the fulnesse of God And we see by comfortable experience, with what gifts of iudgement and good vnderstanding and speech, yea and of prayer also, the Lord furnisheth many, who notwithstanding haue wanted the helpes of good education: wherein the Lord maketh good that auncient prophesie touching the kingdome of Christ, that hee woulde in it poure out his spirit euen vpon seruants and maides, so that the eyes of the blind should bee lightned, and the

Pro. 14, 6

Matth. 11, 30

Pro. 14

Psa. 119, 130

Psal. 25, 14

1 Tim. 3, 16

Psa. 84, 7

Ephes. 3, 19

Isa. 2, 29



best cannot know all, shall hee therefore not labour to know any thing? God forbids. Ignorance by a kinde of necessitye may seeme to haue some excuse, but a voluntary neglect of that which a man may know, cannot haue so much as a colour of allowance.

*Nymphas.* Yet mee thinkes it is hard for the common people ( the greatest parte whereof cannot so much as reade) to attaine to so much knowledge as you seeme to perswade, especially if withall they be such as liue by their labour, and haue charge of children, how shal they spare time for such occasions?

*Epaph.* Merily it is a woefull thinge to consider the dulnesse that is amongst men: and they doe not know what they want that cannot reade ( a thing which notwithstanding, of all other the parts of learning is the most easie, and as soone learned as to be able to play at the cards, if men were as desirous of the one as of the other ); yet howsoever, in this case of knowledge in religion men do cast manie mo perils then they need, and are like the slouthfull man of whom Salomon speaketh, who saith, A lion is without, I shal be slaine

slaine in the streete. For knowl'dge is easie to him that will vnderstande: and the yoke of Christ, it is easie, and his burden light: wherefore serueth the scripture but to giue vnto the simple sharpnesse or wit, and to the child knowledge and discretio? The entrance into thy words (saith Dauid) sheweth light: as soone as a man in humilitie, and in a true desire to knowe God, doeth but begin to apply himielfe to the meanes of knowledge, hee shall secretly feele such a sodaine light cast in vpon his vnderstanding, that he shall be able to apprehend euen the verie secret of the Lord and the grea mystery of godlinesse, and so shall go from strength to strength, vntill hee bee filled with all the fulnesse of God And we see by comfortable experience, with what gifts of iudgement and good vnderstanding and speech, yea and of prayer also, the Lord furnisheth many, who notwithstanding haue wanted the helpes of good education: wherein the Lord maketh good that auncient prophesie touching the kingdome of Christ, that hee woulde in it poure out his spirit euen vpon seruants and maides, so that the eyes of the blind should bee lightned, and the

Pro. 14, 6

Matth. 11, 30

Pro. 24

Psa. 119, 130

Psal. 25, 14

1 Tim. 3, 16

Psa. 84, 7

Ephes. 3, 19

Joel. 2, 29

- Isay 35, 5, 6. cares of the deafe opened, and the dumbe  
 mans tongue be able to sing. And thanks  
 be vnto God for his vnspeakable gift. So  
 that it is a causelesse feare which men  
 haue, who imagine the knowledge of the  
 doctrine of saluation, to bee a matter of  
 that exceeding difficultie. Now for the  
 multitude of wordly busineses, the ne-  
 cessary following whereof men pleade,  
 partly as a matter priuiledging them,  
 partly as a thing hindring them from  
 intending these better occasions; if they  
 had learned what this is, Seeke ye firste  
 the kingdome of God, and his righteouf-  
 nesse, and al these things shall be ministred  
 vnto you: or this, What shal it profit a man  
 though he should win the whole world, if  
 he lose his owne soule? then they wold be  
 ashamed either to thinke religion a hin-  
 drance to their wordly thriving (it beeing  
 a furtherance rather, because it is the  
 blessing of the Lord which maketh rich)  
 or else to mind onely earthly things, spen-  
 ding all their time about that which is  
 on the earth, and neglecting that durable  
 riches, euen the vnsearchable riches of  
 Christ. I know the businesse of the world  
 must be followed; He that laboureth not,  
 let

2 Cor. 9, 15

Math. 16, 26

Prou. 10, 22

Phil. 3, 19

Col. 3, 2

Prouer. 8, 18

Ephes. 3, 8

2 Thes. 3, 10

let him not eate, saith Paul: and if there be any that prouiderh not for his owne, and namely for them of his household, he denieth the saith, and is worse then an infidell. **¶** Yet I know tw, that he who will walke circumspectly, not as a foole, but as a wise Christian, must redeeme the time, and in the midst of his worldly employmentes remember that one needfull thing, which (when al other commodities become that which they are, even nothing) wil tary by him, and shall neuer be taken from him. **¶** Moreover, put case a man bee either so tied by the nature and quality of his calling, that hee can spare no time (so as among others, daye-labozers and other poorer trades-men seeme to bee) or else is destitute of meanes to further his knowledge when hee is priuate and at home, yet if hee woulde bee conscionably careful of profitable spending the Sabbaoth day, learning euery such day, though but one point, and caring to keepe it and to hide it in the heart, and ponderit in the weeke following, that hee may by that means make it his owne, it is incredible to a man that tryeth it not, to what store of spirituall knowledge euen a common man

1 Tim. 5, 8

Eph. 5, 15, 16

Luk. 10, 43

Prou. 23, 5

Psal. 119, 11

Luke 2, 19.

Ephes. 3, 4

man shall attaine, and what vnderstanding he shall haue in the mystery of Christ. **W**ee haue a sayinge touching earthlye thinges that light gaines make heauie purses: we shall surely find it true in this, he that shall labour to grow richer euerye Sabbath but by one point, he shall bee soze he is ware of it grow to a very comfortable portion of the sauing knowledge of Gods truth.

*Nymph.* I haue very carefully attended to this which you haue spoken, and I praise God I find much comfort in it; yet there is one thing behind, which I haue still looked for, which I am bolde to putte you in mind of, lest you shold forget it, and that is touching the good meaninge which the common sort so much trust vnto: they say their heart is good though their skill bee small, and they hope that God will accept it. I pray you satisfie mee in this also. and then I shall be reasonab'y furnished against the plea of the ignorant.

Luke 8, 15

*Epath.* You doe well to minde me of it, howsoeuer I was euen now of my selfe romming to it: An honest and good heart is a thing in the eies of God much esteemed; and it is the especiall thing he craveth

ueth of vs, to giue him our heart: yet generally, that which men call a good heart to Godward, is nothing lesse then that which it is called: for, so long as a mans heart is a dull, ignozant, vnregenerate and vnreformed heart, it is wicked aboue all things. There can bee noe goodnesse in that hart where there dwelleth grosse and blockish ignozance of God and of his truth: It is noe good heart which loueth foolishnes and hateth knowledge, and casteth the word of god behind it. It is no good heart which maketh not the mouth to speake out of the abundance of it, and to be able to giue a reason of the hope that is in it. There may be a zeale of God, where there is noe knowledge of God; but it is but a blind zeale, and God esteemeth it not. They which kil and persecute Gods seruants, may haue a kinde of god meaning. and may thinke that in so doing they doe God seruice, yet this cannot helpe them; so that men are de- ceiued in their god meaning: for no meaning is good, but that which is guided by knowledge yea though the thing meant be in it owne nature good, yet if the meane bee not assured of the goodnesse of it from

Pro. 23, 26

Ier. 17, 9

Prou. 1, 22

Pfalm. 50, 17

Matth. 12, 34

1 Pet. 3, 15

Rom. 10, 2

Iohn 16, 2

from Gods word, his meaning is naught,  
 and that by the rule of Scripture, which  
 Rom. 14, 23. telleth vs, that whatsoeuer is not of faith  
 is sinne.

*Nymp.* I must needs yeelde to this that  
 you say, that it is true: and yet me thinkes  
 Perk. ref. cath it is something hard: for I remember I haue  
 reade in a good author (whose iudgement  
 I think you will also approue of) (that there  
 are many, who though they are ignorant  
 in many thinges, yet they haue a meaning  
 of true faith, and that which is wanting in  
 knowledge is supplied in affection: this is  
 a verie comfortable saying, and to my see-  
 ming also it doeth something fauour the  
 conceit which men haue of being excused  
 by their good meaning.

*Epaph.* I doe approue of the authour  
 you alleage, as of a wortheie instrument  
 in Gods Church: I agree also to that  
 which you haue cited out of his wri-  
 tings: for (as he also sayth) all men haue  
 not that sharpenesse of conceite, and fast-  
 nesse of memoirie, to be able to wade into  
 the depth of euerie poynte, and to remem-  
 ber euerie particular. And indeed an exact  
 knowledge of the misteries of religion, so  
 as to be able to dispute schollerly of them,

*Whit. de sacra  
 script. quest. 2.*



is not required of euery common man: to  
 which ende is the speech of S Augustine;  
 It is not (saith hee) the quicknesse of vn- *August. in lib*  
 derstanding, but the simplicitie of belee- *contra Epistol.*  
 uing which is safest for the people: all this *fund. cap. 4.*  
 is true, but yet it maketh nothing for the  
 defence of that brutish ignorance which  
 men seeke to colour with the pretence of  
 a good meaning: for this rule, that good  
 affection supplieth the wante of knowe-  
 ledge, holdeth onely in those, who hauing  
 in some small measure felte the sweetnesse  
 of knowledge, doe laboꝝ to increase in it.  
 In such it is true, that the sinceritie of the  
 heart maketh a kinde of recompence for  
 the defect of knowledge: but, where there  
 is a setting of a mans selfe vpon the dregs  
 of ignorance, without grieuing and sor-  
 rowing for his owne dulnesse, without  
 caring and indeuoring to thꝛiue in know-  
 ledge, there this rule hath no place, there  
 the pretending good meaning is but sot-  
 tishnesse, and that kind of ignorance ma-  
 keth a man a stranger fro the life of God. *Ephes. 4. 18.*  
 And therefore it is well saide of a learned  
 man, that whereas God forgiueth mani-  
 fold ignorances in his children, yet he re-  
 quireth that wee bee teachable, and not *Melancthon.*  
 vni

**hardened in our owne dulnesse and sluggishnesse.**

*Nymphas.* You haue fully satisfied me touching this doubt : there is onely one thing more behinde, which ignorance pretendeth, and it is common in many mens mouthes: let them (say they) preach and we will pray : they hope their deuotion in praying will do them more good then all your preaching.

*Nymp.* It is a world to see the cunning of the diuell, who goeth about to ouerthrow one holy dutie by another, and to oppose those things which ought to go as it were hand in hand together. But what thing is there so senselesse, whereto ignorance in the Scripture may not be perswaded? It is our English prouerbe, The blinde eateth many a flie: and so in deede the ignorant in the booke of God embrace many grosse and ridiculous absurdities : for if men knewe what the Scripture saith in this case, they woulde neuer caste out such an idle speech : Salomon saith, Hee that turneth away his eare from hearing the law, even his praier shal be abominable. What thinke you shall become of their prayers then who  
resolue

reſolve not to afford the uſe of their eares unto Gods worde? Do they not make a ſaile hand, when by their contempt of preaching they bring a curſe vpon their praying? Adde hitherto that Paule ſayth expreſſly, that as men cannot Rom. 10, 14 call on him in whom they haue not beleeued, ſo neither can they belecue without hearing, nor heare without a Preacher. Can men credite Paul in this, and yet thinke to pray well without the helpe of preaching? Surely no. How can men pray aright, without knowledge of their owne wantes without the apprehenſion of the promiſes of God, vpon which to build their aſſurance to be heard? And how can they attaine to either of theſe ordinarily, but by the preaching expounding, opening & applying of Gods word? That which men commonly call praying, is but a lip-labor, conſiſting in the recitall of a ſew words, the ſenſe & meaning whereof is not underſtood, and it is mere babling in the eares of God; it may be well called the ſacrifice of fooles: Eccleſ. 4, 17 and it may truly be ſaid of ſuch blind deuotions and tongue-prayers, which the heart doeth not conceiue, as it was ſayd  
of

Isay. 1, 14

of the hipocriticall ceremoniousnesse of the Jewes; The soule of the Lord hateth them, they are a burden vnto him, hee is wearie to beare them. I thinke I haue sufficiently discovered the vbreaknesse of this silly obiection.

*Nymph.* I praise God I doe also see the vanity of it; and I hope I for my part shall learne so to esteeme of preaching, as that I shall also reuerence that good meanes which God hath in his wisdom ordained for my help in the performāce of that holy dutie, that so by often hearing I may learne to pray, and by praying I may make good vse of the things I hear. VVel sir, now that you haue armed mee against the common pretences of the ignorant sorte, whereby they make themselues belecue, or rather are made belecue by the diuell, that it is no daunger to contemne preaching. I must challenge your promise, and craue your helpe also touching another sorte of men, who as they are ignorant in the matters of God, so are they come to a higher degree of hardnesse, and haue euen almost taken vp their seate in the chaire of scorners, and doe not onely not regarde preaching ( which is the fault of those  
of

Psalm. 1, 1

of whom I haue spoken hitherto ) but  
scoffe at it, and endeavour by lading it with  
sundry reproaches altogether to disgrace  
it.

*Epaph.* I am as willing to perfoyme  
my promise as I haue to was it ; and  
yet I know, that in regarde of these pro-  
phane ones themselues, this will be but  
a thanklesse peece of seruice : for a scorner Pro. 15, 12  
loueth not him that rebuketh him, neither  
will he go vnto the wise. Therefore I wil  
do it rather in desire to satisfie you, then  
in any great hope I haue to reclaime  
them.

*Nymp.* Indeepe I haue somtimes cast  
in a worde according to my skill, when I  
haue bene in the companie of such ; and  
they haue for the most part still shewed Pro. 14, 9  
themselues like the foole, who maketh a  
*mocke of sin*, to whom it is euen a pastime to Pro. 10, 23  
*do wickedly* : yet it is good to be able some-  
times to answer them according to their Pro. 26, 5.  
foolishnesse, *leaste they shoulde be wise in their* The obie-  
*owne conceit.* Wel then, to come to the mat- cations of  
ter without circumstance, the exceptions of prophane  
profane men against preaching are diuers, me against  
some against the persons of the preachers, preaching.  
some against the hearers, some otherwise,

as you shall vnderstand in seuerall, First, touching you that are the preachers, it is common in their mouthes: Who be worse then they? If there be any couetousnes, or pride or ambition, & the like, wher shal you find it but in the Clergie? When they are in the pulpit, they must needs say somewhat; and therefore, though when they be there, they be very hotte and eager against vice, yet in their own courses they are as bad or worse then other men. This is one exception.

*Epaph.* The answer to this wretched exception (not for the waight of argument y<sup>t</sup> it carrieth, but for the variety of leudnes & error which is in it) wil diuide it self into many particulers. First of all therefore touching them that obiect this, they are very properly by a learned man of our times compared to foule gamesters, who when they haue lost all at the cards, and haue the last dealing in their hands, and perceiue that, not likely to proue to their minde, rise vp in a chafe and sling downe all, and saye there hath bene foule playe playd, when indeed the fault is chiefly in themselves: so many, being naught themselves, & being (as the Apostle speaketh) damned by their owne consciences, when they

M. Green-  
ham.

Tit. 3. 11

they haue no other thift, crie out vppon  
Preachers, thereby to cloke their lowne  
iniquity: therein not much vnlike to him,  
that in a throng at a faire or market, bids  
men beware of the Cut-purse, that he in  
the mean time (being a man of the trade)  
may practise his diuving into mens poc-  
kets with the lesse suspicion. And marke  
it when you will, you shall neuer finde  
them any other then more sensuall men,  
yea and for the most parte openly noted  
for some one bad course or other, of drunken-  
kenneſſe, oppreſſion, vsury, couetouſnes  
adultery, or the like, that make this ob-  
iection. Secondly, (because there may be  
truth in an obiection, though there be lit-  
tle truth or honeſtie in him that maketh  
it) know this therefore for the ſubſtance  
of this cauill, that put caſe it were ſo,  
(which thankes be to God is not ſo) that  
all Preachers did confute their owne  
Sermons with their euill life, and had  
Eſaus handes with Iacobs voice, and  
were like a file which ſmootheth other  
things, it ſelfe remaining rough:  
yet this coulde make nothing againſt  
preaching. For is Phiſicke naught,  
because many Phyſitians perhappes  
C 2 live



live contrarie to their owne rules of phisicke? Or is lawe damnable, because some professors thereof doe lye lawles, giuing rules of equity to others, themselves keeping none but ill rule? No man will be so without sence to affirme it: why then shall the course of preaching be condemned, for the supposed misdemeanour of them which preach? God forbid. Is any man so vnwise as to disobey a warrant comming apparantly from a man of authority, because the Constable or Tithing man is a naughty fellowe that bringeth it? Who then but either a foole or a froward heart wil tread the holy doctrine of God vnder his fete, because he is a man of no good carriage that deliuereth the same? Thirdly, men are to consider this also, that all are not Ministers which are so called, neither all true Preachers come from God that stand vp in the pulpit: for in these corrupte times many are crepte into the Church of God by the window, whom God did neuer set apart to that holy seruice: now it is vnpossible, but that such as these (though they may a long time couer their double iniquity vnder a dissembled sanctity) yet should at last breake out into extremities. Now it

*Simulata  
sanctitas est  
duplex*

it is against common reason, to turne their miscarriage into the generall disgrace of all honest Ministers. There be many counterfeite dog-leaches, and pretenced Surgions, that hauing gotten a little Kubarbe or Balsamum, and some few words of art, run about the country and beguile the people, and cozen them of their money, purging their purses & scouring their bagges, vnder coulour of cleansing their bodies & searching their sores: Shal we say therefore that all Physicians though they be neuer so well learned, neuer so well experienced, neuer so conscionable and wary in their courses of administering are cozeners, and that it were pittyp but the countrey were ridde of them all: it were an indignitie once to imagine it. There is no profession, but it hath as it were a certaine scumme, and there are some that make shew of it, that are altogether vnworthy of it. Shal the vilenesse & vnbeseming carriage of those that are but the refuse, and (as I may so speake) the taile of an honest profession, be cast into the face of all the rest that belong vnto it: Reason it selfe saythe it is vnnete. And men would some yeelde to

this, were it not that the diuell hath taught them to be wise in any thinge, sauing in religion, to fauor any profession sauing that of the ministry. Men are herein like vnto many Lawiers, who if you put them a case, without naminge the parties, will tell you truely what is law: but whē they vnderstand who they be whō the matter concerneth, then they change their opinion, and the law is altered. So in the world, ask you any man of cōmon vnderstanding this questiō, whether it be meete that all of a trade or company should be challenged, because some such or such are worthy to be punished, he will tell you there is no reason for it: but come to particulers touching preachers, thē he is of another mind he wil be ready to say y all Christs disciples were naught because Iudas was a diuell: & because he (it may be) knoweth some two or 3, sir Iohns or some other (perhaps of better note in the eyes of the worlde, but yet scarcely worthy of their places) to bee climinge with Diotrephes, or embracing this present world with *Demas* or carrying themselves insolently with *Pashur*, or otherwise keeping bad rule with him, who imaginings

tha

Iohn 6, 70

Iohn 9  
2 Tim. 4, 10  
Iero. 20, 1, 2

that his māster doth defer his coming, be- Luk. 12, 45  
gins to smite the seruāts and the maidens,  
and to eate and drinke and to be drunken :  
by and by he concludeth, that they are all  
naught, and voweth that hee will neuer  
beleue any of them, for all their shewes  
of holines. Fourthly, for the further clea-  
ring of this point, this is also to be consi-  
dered, that Ministers and Preachers do  
not thinke themselves freedde from com-  
mon infirmities, or endued with some  
greater power or larger priuiledge a-  
gainst sin, then others : & therefore euery  
slip is not by and by to be take hold of (as  
the manner is) and to be turned to the ble-  
mishing of a whole profession. He is saide  
to be a man of vpriight conuerſation, not  
who slippeth neuer, (for who is hee that  
can vnderstand his faults ?) but he who by Psal. 19, 12  
his seldome slippes, and by his not conti-  
nuing in any one knowne euill, shew-  
eth himselfe to be a man that vnſainedly  
desireth to haue his carriage such, as bee- Phil. 1, 27  
cometh the Gospell of Christ. Lastly, mark  
this also & you shal find it true, those who  
are euer harping vpon this string, touch-  
ing y<sup>e</sup> liues of preachers, let the be vrged  
to particulers, you shal perceiue, y<sup>e</sup> either

their euill speaking is occasioned by such kind of Ministers as I before named, or else, if they haue any exception against any of the better and painfuller sort, it is such, which if it bee well examined and thoroughly looked into, will be founde rather to saue of malice in the speaker, then to argue anye great erroꝝ in the accused. I told you I should be long in this point, but now I haue done, vnlesse you haue ought further to vge therein.

*Nymph.* The most that I haue to saye, is, that men of the worlde that shall heare this Plea of yours, will straightway say, that you can speake well for your selues, and that though you agrauate other men sinns vppon occasions, yet you can salue vppe matters that concerne your selues, and help to couer your owne infirmities.

*Epaph.* The diuell doth well answere his name; for there is nothing can bee so wel spoken, but he and his can cauil at it: for mine owne part, I strue with my self to speake vnpartially. The profession I must loue, because God hath called mee vnto it; yet were I not of it, God hath taught me to honoꝝ it, because the feet of them are beautifull which bringe glad tidings

dings of peace. And howsoever many do  
so far exalt themselves in their birth, in  
their riches, in their wisdom, in their  
personage and blood, that they thinke it a  
disparagement vnto them to consecrate  
all their life to the ministerie of the Gos-  
pell: yet as Christ himselfe disdained not  
the title of a Minister, so among all the ti-  
tles of kingdomes and countries, this  
was to that great King the most hono-  
rable, Solomon the Preacher. I must there-  
fore as a Minister, but especially as a  
Christian endeour to maintaine the cre-  
dit of the ministry. And yet I am not so  
carried away with a humor of magnify-  
ing the profession, but that I doe see and  
behold both mine owne & other mens im-  
perfections. I know, that though it bee  
true, that we are many times slandered  
by foule mouthes, yet we often faile, and  
giue great offence euen vnto those that  
feare God, who depending vppon vs, are  
either grieved in heart, or (which is  
worse) grievously misledde, by our want  
of watchfulnesse ouer our selues. And I  
hartily begge of God so to stablish vs in e-  
uery worde and good work, that while we  
liue wee may be an example to them that

Rom. 15, 8

1 Pet. 5, 2

2. The. 2, 17

1 Tim. 4, 12

be-

Hebr. 13.7

believe : and when vbe haue finished our course the people may haue cause to remēber vs, & to follow our faith, considering what hath bin the end of our conuersation.

*Nymph.* My hart sayth Amen vnto your good praier: and God forgiue vs our backwardnes in that we make to seldom mentiō of you, which are our Ministers in our praers vnto him. But now to the next exceptiō which is against the hearers ; the common saying is, that there are none vsually so bad as these Puritans (for so in their ignorance, not knowing truly what a Puritane is, and in their mallice seeking to disgrace honest men, they terme euery man that makes conscience of hearing the worde, for the building himselfe *in holy faith*) they are nothing but a packe of hipocrites, men that are not to be trusted for all their faire shewes, holy horses, & the like names of disgrace, which hell can inuent : and out of this puddle of reproachfull specches against the louers of preaching, they gather vp filth to cast into the face of preaching it selfe.

*Epaph.* This exception, and that which went nexte before, are so well like y they doe easily appere to haue had one father, euen the diuel, who was a slanderer from the  
the



the beginning: but blessed be God, that it is no matter of any greate difficultie to discover, even the deepenesse of Sathan to be more simplicitie. First then, for this touching the hypocrisie of our hearers, it is but a more slander: for (to the glory of God be it spoke) ther are many of those that reuerence this so much contemned course of preaching, who haue not onely a shewe of godlinesse, but do also feele the power thereof: and are careful, as they beleeue in God, so to shew forth good works: so that their liues doe adorne the doctrine of God our Saviour, yea and (which is the cause of y<sup>e</sup> so great malice of the vngodly) eue reprove the lewdnes of the irreligious. Secondly, suppose it to be so (as it may well, hypocrites mingling themselves with the soundest Christians) that some of those that carrie a face of holinesse and zeale, and loue to the worde, doe not withstanding hold fellowship with the vnfruitfull works of darknes, liuing after the lusts of men and running with the wicked to the same excesse of riot: yet who is able to say that euer they receiued any encouragment by preaching, so to do? Hath that taught them any such matter, and not rather the cleane contrarie? Let mallice speake,

Reuel. 2, 24

2 Tim. 3, 5  
Tit. 3, 8

Tit. 2, 10

Ephes. 5, 11

1 Pet. 4, 2, 3

2 Thes. 4, 6

Ephes. 5, 6

2 Sam. 5, 14

if it be not constrained for verie shame to keep silence. Doth the preacher perswade any man to be an vsurer, an oppressour, a hard dealer, a drunkard, a whozemaster, or the like? Nay it is well knowne, that he testifieth to one & other, that the Lorde is auenger of al such things, & that for them his wrath cometh vppon the children of disobedience. These two things, namely the falsshode of the exception, and the bad consequence of it, if it were true, maye stoppe their mouths which vse it: but you tolde me (as I remember) that there be sundrie arguments of this kinde. I pray you let vs heare them: no doubt you shall see them all when they are arraigned and brought to receiue their triall at the Tribunal seat of Gods word, to be condemned for lying vanities, and to be no more able to stand before it, than the Philistins Dagon coulde keepe his thyrine (though no doubt he was fast nayled to it) when the arke of Jehouah came in place.

*Nymph* The next exception is of a larger scoape, and fighteth against you with the generall wretchednesse of this last generation. You shall see it in it owne likeness, that you may the better iudge of it.

It

It commonly runneth thus: in former times when there was lesse preaching, and the Scripture was more geason then now it is, the world (they say) was much better, there was more loue, more hospitallitie, more trueth, more mercie, more good dealing amongst men then is to be found at this day: so that wheras there is now much lawing, much contention, much oppressing, much cruelty, and sinnes of the like nature, al this is laid vpon the backe of preaching: this is the leauen that hath put the whole worlde out of taste. This is also a peece of Dagon's stump. I make no doubt but the Lorde hath furnished you with weapons mightie thorough *him, to cast downe holdes, and euerie high thing that is exalted against the knoweledge of Christe Iesus.* 2 Cor. 10, 4, 5

*Epaph.* I perceiue the Diuell much doubteth the ruine of his kingdome: and therefore though preaching, amongst men is thought to be but winde, yet hee seeleth his state begin to totter with the power of it, so that hee doth stretch his wit, and set his pollicy on worke, and spareth for no engines to beat downe that which hee shal neuer be able to ouerturne. And that as we haue seene hitherto, so I doubt not but

Jerem. 5, 13

but we shall further see it in the examination of particulars. For those elder times (as men call them) first it is to be noted, that it is true indeed that many of those who lived in thē, were in the eyes of men very commendable for these morall vertues (as they are termed) of hospitalitie, of bounty, of humanity, of plain dealing, & the like: the reason was this, Satan let them alone in these things because he did hold them captiue at his will in the principal. Though he doth hate these specialties in ther owne nature, being an vtter enemy to all goodnesse, yet hee was content to giue way in those lesser things, so long as he could nuzle them in ignorance of God and of his worde, which hee well knew was both hold enough for himself, and sufficient inough also to blemish and disgrace all those reputed vertues before God. But now, the light of knowledge being come into the world, & spreading it self further by the more cōmon vse of preaching, Sathan secretly perswadeth many, that it is enough for thē to haue knowledge, though they neglect practise: and he laboreth also by killing mens care of the wing themselves forward in these duties of

of ciuilitie, to lessen the credit of the Gospell, & to haue matter of slander against the knowledge of Gods truth. Secondly to speake more specially of this last and worst age of the world: if it be well vnderstood, preaching may be saide to be the occasion, though not the naturall cause of the extreame wretchednesse thereof: according as Paul saith, that sinne tooke occasion by the commaundement, and when the commaundement came, sinne reuiued, and grewe out of measure sinfull. Now the preaching and publishing of the truth, may be saide to be the occasion of much euill in these last times, in two respects: first, because of the fuller discovery of sin: In the dayes of former ignorance many of the same grosse sins were, which now are, but either they were smothered in the darkenesse of the times, or if they were a little discried, yet they were reputed nothing so odious. But al things when they were reprooued of the light, became manifest; for it is light that maketh all things manifest: so that now, sin being seene more, is thought also to bee more: for sinne not espied, is in mennes iudgements as no sinne. So then partly  
in

Rom. 7. 8, 9  
13

How preaching is the occasion of sinne.

Ephes. 5, 13

in this respect it may bee saide, that since there was so much preaching, the worlde hath bin worse, because the holy doctrine which is taught, condemneth manye thinges for sin, which the blind world esteemed as no sinne, and because the liues of those which are conuerted by preaching, doe shewe moze euidently the monstrous sins of those which are giuen ouer to vngodlinesse. Secondly, the preaching of the worde is an occasion of sinne, (as also the law of God is) not in it selfe, or in it own nature; (for it reproboueth sinne, and setteth it selfe against all manner of vngodlinesse:) but it is so, partly thorough the corruption of our nature, partly thorough the iust iudgement of God: the corruption of our nature is alwayes the moze furious, the moze it is restrained, striving still to doe that most, which is most forbidden: euerie humoꝝ desireth that most, whereby it may bee most encreased. Let a Physitian forbid a melancholike man such and such meates, hee shall find himselfe to haue an appetite to no meate so much, as to that which is inhibited. I do verily thinke the other trees in Paradise afforded fruite as pleasant to

to the eye, and as good for meate as the  
 forbidden tree : but when as Satan had  
 made a little entry, then euen that cir-  
 cumstance that it was forbidden, did set  
 an edge vpon the womans desire, and  
 made her more faine to eate of that one,  
 then of any of the rest which were allow-  
 ed. Paule saith that the law is the strength 1 cor. 15,  
 of sinne, both because it encrease the 56  
 guilt of sinne, and because sin thereupon  
 becommeth more outrageous : according  
 as Jeremy witnesseth out of his owne ex-  
 perience; I cried out (saith he) of wronge,  
 and proclaimed desolation, therefore the Ier. 20, 8  
 word of the Lord was made a reproch vn-  
 to me : it seemeth that vpon his preaching  
 the people grewe to greater insolencie.  
 Besides, there are many points of neces-  
 sitie to be taught, which though they bee  
 deliuered with neuer so great circumspe-  
 ction, yet the leudnesse of mans heart,  
 not being ouer-ruled by the power of  
 Gods spirit, will abuse the same. So we  
 see, the doctrine of Justification by faith  
 only breedeth negligence in good works,  
 as appeereth by the caueat of the Apostle,  
 VVnat shall we say the?shal we continue stil  
 in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. Rom. 6, 1



Gal. 5, 13.

Phil. 2, 12  
13

Iude 4.

So the doctrine of our freedome by Christ from the curse of the law, bringeth forth carnall libertie: that made Paul so carefull to vse that restraint, Onely vse not your libertie as an occasion to the flesh. In like maner this point, that we are insufficient to keepe the law, & that we cannot so much as think a good thought, but as God worketh it in vs: Satan works by & by vpon a supposed aduantage, & draws (as much as he may) to carelesnes thereupon. And therefore y<sup>e</sup> spirit of God in his great wisdom, together with the teaching of that point, that it is God which worketh in vs both the will and the deede, coupleth this exhortation, Make an ende of your owne saluation with feare and trembling. The same might bee shewed by many other pointes, which yet notwithstanding is so, not in the nature of the doctrine, but in the wretched disposition of mans hearte, when abuseth the comfortable doctrine of the Gospell, and turneth the grace of our God into wantonnesse. Againe, as sin through the corruption of nature taketh occasion to multiply it selfe by the doctrine preached, in so it falleth out by the iust iudgement of God, that y<sup>e</sup> contempt of much preaching bringeth

bringeth forth abundance of iniquitie.  
 My word (saith God by the Prophet) that  
 goeth out of my mouth, shal not return vn-  
 to me void. And therfore in the same place *Iſai. 55, 12*  
 it is compared to the raine; because as the  
 raine maketh y<sup>e</sup> ground, if not more fruit, *verse 10*  
 ful, surely then more vnprofitable: so the  
 word of God, either maketh mens hearts  
 softer, and themſelues more fruitfull in  
 good workes, or elle harder, and their  
 liues more abominable. And yet is this *2 cor. 2, 15*  
 no fault in the word, for that is vnto God  
 the sweete ſauour of Chriſt, euen in them  
 which periſh. I haue bene longer in this  
 point then I thought: but because it is ſo  
 much ſtood vpon by many, I haue the re-  
 ſon ther endeouored to manifeſt the full truth  
 her in this behalfe.

*Nymp.* Truly for mine owne perticular,  
 I muſt needs confeſſe, that you haue taught  
 me more touching this point then I haue  
 theretofore obſerued. Indeepe I haue many  
 times wondred, how it ſhould come to paſſe  
 that there being now (as I thinke) much  
 more preaching againſt ſin, then hath bin  
 in the dayes of our forefathers, yet there  
 ſhould be that abundance of extreme im-  
 pietie: but nowe I ſee the reaſon of it.

First, ignorance in Gods word, is the supporter of Satans kingdome, and he hauing drowned men in that, gaue way to other things, which being good in their owne nature, and approued of in the eyes of men, yet lost their grace, being done without knowledge. Secondly, mans corrupt nature, spider-like turneth the wholsome doctrine into poison, and striueth more when it feeleth it selfe limited. Thirdly, it is iust with God, to giue them vp into vile affecti-

Rom. 1, 26 *ons, and to lay iniquitie vpon their iniquitie,*  
 Pla. 69, 27 *that they may worke all uncleannesse, even*  
 Ephe. 4, 19 *with greedinesse, who receiue not the loue of*  
 2 the. 2, 10 *the truth that they might be saved. This*  
 I thinke is the summe of all which you haue  
 spoken touching this.

*Epaph.* You haue well obserued it; that is the very substance of my answer to that exception, which I thinke is sufficient to satisfie those whom the truth of God grounded vpon the Scripture may satisfie. I pray you now proceede to the next, if there be any more of this kind.

*Nymph.* There is onely to my remembrance one more, and that is taken from the tumults & diuisions which accompany your doctrine: they say it many times breedeth

deth difference euen among those betwixt whom formerly there was the best agreement.

*Epaph.* My good neighbor, maruell not at this : for as I shewed you in the beginning of our conference, that resistance doth alwayes accompany the first publishing of the truth, so also doth diuision of hearts follow it : and to this end is that speech of Christ to his Disciples, Thinkenot that I am come to send peace Math. 10, 34 into the earth, (that is, such peace as the world dreameth of) I came not to send peace, but the sword. We read that when Paul exercised his ministry at Iconium, there was much ado, and the people of Act. 14, 4 the citie were diuided, and some were with the Iewes, and some with the Apostles. This made him to be accused before the ciuill Magistrate, for a pestilent fellow, Acts 24, 5. and a mouer of sedition, according as at this day factious and humorous is a common imputation. Now a diuision cannot chosse but follow preaching : for act 17, 32, 34 when as among the hearers, some mock, Acts 17, 4, 5 some cleaue vnto the teachers, some be- Acts 28, 29 leeue and others belecue not and men fall to haue great reasoning among the elues,

A&amp;ts 13, 10

Reu. 3, 16

A&amp;ts 18, 17

Matth. 3, 12

Matth. 25

Ephes. 5 13

there cannot but follow a kind of diuision  
 & siding; so that they which in their igno-  
 rance accorded together touching religiō,  
 are by the working of the worde sundred,  
 & some become zealous followers, others  
 malicious opposers, laboring to stop the  
 passage of y<sup>e</sup> Gospell, & to peruert the strait  
 waies of the Lord. & some neuters neither  
 cold nor hot but iust of deputy Gallio his  
 religion, who cared nothinge for those  
 things. The preaching of the word is the  
 fan in the hand of Christ by which he par-  
 teth his wheat from the chaffe; and wher-  
 by he maketh way for that great day of  
 separation, in which the beleeuing sheep  
 shal be seperated from the rebellious and  
 vbeleeuing goates. Againe, let it not be  
 forgotten that the word in the right ap-  
 plying of it, is called a light which maketh  
 all things manifest. When things lie hid  
 in the darknes, though they all differ each  
 from other in colour, yet they seeme all a-  
 like; but the light approaching, the variety  
 of colours is sone descryed. So, though  
 men in the duskiness of ignorance are  
 reputed to be knit together in the vnitie  
 of affection, yet when the bright beames  
 of Godes worde break in among them,  
 the

the thoughtes of many hearts be opened, and then you shall see diuers humors, and varietie of dispositions. By these things it appeareth, that if it be well vnderstood, diuision and tumult (especially at the beginning and first entrie of it among an vntaught people) must needes follow the soundnes of settled preaching: though those that are reclaimed and brought to the knowledge of God, are all of one heart and of one soule, proceeding by one rule, minding one thing; and endeavouring to keepe the vnitie of the spirit in the bond of peace.

Acts 4, 32  
Phil. 2, 16  
Ephes. 4, 3

*Nymph.* You haue (thanks be to God) at least to my iudgement, well quit your selfe against this sort of men. The next that you haue to doe withall, are more dangerous, being such as Paule saith, which doe seeme wise in this worlde, and doe both liue after a good ciuill fashion, and doe also make shew to bee not altogether enemies vnto religion. They haue also some insight into the Scripture, and are wont to reade it, and other good bookes priuately: onely this, their resolution is to keepe a certaine temper in matters of Religion, to carrie themselues in an allowable conformitie,

1 Cor. 3, 18

and not to be ouerfroward as many seeme to be, whose zeale they account rash and heady indiscretion.

Prou. 3, 7

1 Cor. 1, 25

Psal. 68, 2

*Epaph.* The danger of this kinde of people, is most of all in respect of themselves, because this, to bee wise in a mans owne eyes and to feare God cannot stand together; otherwise, for answering any thinge that they are able to object, it is a matter of no such great difficulty; For the foolishnesse of God is wiser then men: and as waxe melteth before the fire, so shall their best framed conceits vanish at the very name and presence of the Scripture.

The allegations of worldly wise men against preaching.

*Nymph.* I am glad you are so confident: for to tell you true, these thinges being as they are, verye agreeing to mans reason, haue much troubled mee, and I haue not vpon the sodaine knowne well what to answer, when in my presence these thinges haue bene vrged by such as are thought in the world to be men of good discretion. First then it is demaunded, why preaching shoulde bee the most excellent meanes of spirituall instruction, and wherefore you shold take so much vpo you, as y<sup>e</sup> your speaking shold be able to saue mēs souls; you be  
but



but men as others are, and it is but your pride, who because you would be thought some body, do thus endeavour to extoll the worth and necessitie of your profession.

*Epaph.* Here is indeede a perillous argument, it sauozeth altogether of the saluicinesse of an ignozante and vnhum-  
bled heart. It is come to a proper passe,  
when as the sonne of man, who dwelleth  
in a house of clay, whose foundation is in  
the dust, and which is but a worme, shall  
dare to talke so presumptuously, and so to  
set his mouth against heauen, as to aske of  
God a reason of his dooings. Is it not e-  
nough that y<sup>e</sup> Lord hath made it knowne  
vnto vs, that his will is by the foolishnes  
of preaching to saue those which belecue?  
O Man, who art thou which pleadest a-  
gainst God? And yet beholde a reason,  
though this kinde of men generally are  
wiser in their own conceit then seuen men  
that can render a reason; and a man may  
haue more hope of a foole then of them.  
Loke what reason there was, why the  
Lorde would haue the walles of Jericho  
beaten downe, onely with the sounde of  
Rammes hornes, and with a shout: loke  
also why the Lorde would haue no more  
civ

Iob. 4, 19  
Iob. 25, 6

Psal. 73, 8, 9

1 Cor. 1, 28  
Rom. 9, 20

Prou. 26, 16

verse 12

- circumstance obserued, in the cleansing  
of leproous Naaman but onely this, VVash  
& be cleane; the same is the reason why  
God had sanctified the ministry of man  
to so excellent a work, as is, the casting  
downe of the holds of Sathan, and the ga-  
thering together of his Saintes. God vsed  
no engines of warre, no pollicies of  
men, in the ouerthrow of the walles of  
Iericho, to the end the people might  
haue god cause to say: This was the  
Lords doing, and it is maruellous in  
our eyes. So likewise the Prophet  
vsed so little ceremonie about Naaman,  
that hee might see the finger of God in  
his recouerie. The same may be saide of  
Preaching, the Lorde hath sanctified  
hearing to bee the outwarde meanes to  
beget faith: and hath imparted to vs the  
treasure of his worde in earthen vessels,  
to the ende that the whole glorie of our  
conuersion may be his, and that He that  
reioyceth in the renewing of his minde,  
and the reclaiming of his soule, may re-  
ioyce in the Lorde, and acknowledge  
with humilitie, the excellencie of that po-  
wer, which by so meane a meanes coulde  
bring so mightie things to passe. It is a  
general

1 King. 5, 13

2 Cor. 10, 4

Ephes. 4, 12

Psal. 118, 23

2 Cor. 4, 7.

1 Cor. 1, 31

4 Cor. 4, 7

generall rule, and holdeth in the whole  
course of our saluation, that Gods po-  
wer is made perfect (that is, apparant <sup>2 Cor. 12, 9</sup>  
and moze conspicuous) through weaknes.  
Great is the pride and arrogancie of the  
heart of man: and if it may find it selfe a-  
ble though but by a thought, to further  
and helpe forward it owne saluation, it  
prides it selfe forthwith, and to it selfe se-  
cretly, it moze magnifieth y little, which  
it imagineth to be in it owne power, then  
all y which it receiveth frō the Lord. For  
this cause, and for the prevention of this  
euill, God in his great wisdom, hath <sup>1 Tim. 3, 16</sup>  
so carried the whole Mysterie of godlines,  
from the first foundation of it in heauen, <sup>1 Pet. 1, 2</sup>  
(his Election according to his foreknow-  
ledge) vnto the last perfecting of it vntill <sup>Philip. 1, 6</sup>  
the day of Iesus Christ, that when a man  
shall enter into a deepe consideration of  
it, and withall marke the order and pro-  
gresse of his owne conuersion, he may lay <sup>Prou. 30, 32</sup>  
his hand vpon his mouth, and in the truth  
of his soule may say: Not vnto me o Lorde <sup>Psal. cxv. 1</sup>  
not vnto me, but vnto thy name giue the  
glory. This is the sum: the reason why  
the Lord hath thought good to commend  
the hearing of a Preacher and teacher,  
aboue

Col. 1, 13

Prou. 16, 4

Rom. 11, 36

1 Cor. 1, 21

Rom. 1, 21, 22

1 Cor. 8, 2

aboue other courses, for the calling of vs  
 from the power of darkenesse into the  
 kingdome of his deare sonne, is because it  
 maketh most for the setting forth of Gods  
 glorie, which is the thing chiefly respect-  
 ed by him, and for which he made all  
 things, euen to this very end, that all be-  
 ing of him, and through him, and for him,  
 to him might be glorie for ever. If it were  
 leste vnto man by his owne wisdom to  
 finde out God in the wisdom of God, in  
 the pride of his hearte fearing his owne  
 disparagement, he woulde neuer make  
 choise of preaching, (for we see howe the  
 world in the wisdom thereof doth euen  
 scorne it) but he woulde either drowne  
 himselfe in the puddle of ignorance, as  
 the most doe, or else trust to his owne in-  
 dustrie, as many doe, vppon whome this  
 curse iustly falleth, that they become vain  
 in their imaginations, and when they pro-  
 fesse themselves wise, proue meere fooles,  
 thinking they knowe much, but yet kno-  
 wing nothing as they ought to knowe. If  
 this reason cannot satisfie those, who will  
 needes haue a reason of Gods ordinance,  
 I knowe not what will satisfie them.  
 Once I am sure, that as many as haue  
 learned

learned the first lesson of Christianitie, to  
denie themselves, and to vnderstande ac-  
cording to sobrietie, they wil yeild to this  
truth, and by yeilding, no doubt they shal  
haue comforte. Nowe whereas wee are  
thought to take too much vppon vs, so of-  
ten as wee endeuor to make knowne the  
woorth and excellencie of our office, it is  
a more slander: for I hope we haue lear-  
ned to preach not our selues, but Christ Ie-  
sus, and to accounte our selues no more  
then the Ministers by whome ye belecue.  
We confesse the increase to be the Lords:  
we leaue the purifying and opening of the  
hearte onely to him. God forbid that we  
shoulde dare (as it were) to encroch vpon  
the Lords right, seeing we knowe that he  
is a iealous God, and wil not giue his glory  
to another. This is our opinion of our  
selues herein, and if any man bee so suspi-  
cious or so hardly conceited of vs, that he  
will not otherwise be perswaded, let him  
remember that Loue thinketh not euell.  
And yet I must needs adde this also, that  
so is the Lord pleased to blesse the labours  
of painfull Ministers in his Church. that  
hee vouchsafeth them the name of Gods  
ladouers, nay which is more, workers to-  
gether

Luke 9, 23

Rom. 12, 3

2 Cor. 4, 7

1 Cor. 3, 5

verse 6.

Acts 15, 9

Exod. 20, 5

Isa. 42, 8

1 Cor. 13, 9

1 Cor. 3, 9

2 Cor. 6, 1

3 Tim. 4, 16

gether with his grace, and sauers of them which heare them: The Lord for the gracing and crediting of the instrument, and to preserue it from contempt, attributeth that to it, which is in his owne onely power to effect. Tel me now, whether this answer doth in your opinion silence this grand obiection.

*Nymp.* A man woulde thinke, that this which you haue spoken, shoulde stop their mouthes which are otherwise minded: but yet they do reple and say, that you doe much streighten the grace and power of God, and seeme as it were to tye the workinge of Gods spirit ( which yet *bloweth where it listeth* ) to your tongues: as though without preaching, there were no saluation: whereby you seeme also to cutte them cleane off from any hope of heauen, which either heretofore haue wanted, or now enioy not the common and ordinarie vse of preaching.

*Epaph.* It is no wrong done vnto the grace of God, to limit it to these meanes, which God in his wisdom hath set apart for the conueyance thereof vnto vs.

When Paule was in his dangerous sea-  
 booyage, in the night there stood by him  
 the

Iohn 3, 8

Actes. 27, 23

the Angell of God, saying, Lo, God hath  
 giuen vnto thee all that sayle with thee:  
**yet notwithstanding**, when as after-  
 wards, the mariners were about to flie out  
 of the shippe, and had let downe the boat  
 into the sea, **purposely to make an escape,** verse 30, 31.  
 Paul saide to the Centurion and the souldi-  
 ours: Except these abide in the ship, ye can  
 not be safe. **Did Paule heerein streighten**  
**the almightie power of God,** in saying,  
 there coulde bee no safetie without the  
 staying of those marriners in the shippe?  
**Was the Lordes hand shortened,** that he  
 coulde not deliuer, but by the skill and in-  
 dustrie of those men? Surely no: but, be-  
 cause Paul knew, y<sup>e</sup> God was not pleased  
 otherwise to giue deliuerance: therefore  
 he said, that vnlesse the mariners taried,  
 the companie could not be preserued. The  
 learned doe thus distinguish of the power  
 of God: it is an absolute power, by which ἐν ὅσῳ δύναται  
 θελεῖ. Damas.  
 lib. 1. ad cal-  
 cem.  
 he can doe infinite thinges which he will  
 not doe: so Iohn saide of him, that he was  
 able of the verie stones to raise vp children  
 vnto Abraham. Again, it is an actuall Matth. 3, 9  
 or a working power, which hee executeth Hoc solum non  
 potest Deus  
 quod non vult.  
 Aug. in lib. de  
 Symb.  
 in the gouerning of the worlde and the  
 thinges therein: nowe when we speake  
 of the power of God in this sense,



*Dei posse velle  
est, non posse,  
nolle. Tert. adu  
Pras.*

*2 Pet. 5, 2  
Jer. 3, 15*

*John 6. 31*

it may be truely said, that he cannot doe that which he will not doe. So touching preaching, we may say without any restraint of Gods power, that except there be preaching men cannot be saued : not that God is tied to the voice of man, that without it hee cannot saue; but because the Scripture hath reuealed to vs, that these things are linked together with an indissoluble knot, praying, faith, hearing preaching, sending. There is no praying without faith, there is noe faith but by hearing, there is noe hearing to beget faith but of a preacher sent, that is, furnished with gifts from aboue, for the feeding of the flock of Christ depending vpon him with knowledge and vnderstanding If it shall be urged (as mee thought you also touched it) that we shall by this, preiudice them who haue either liued & died without preaching, or those who enioy it not now: I answer, that it is one thing what God can doe where the meanes is wanting, another thing what hee will doe where the meanes is supplied. When the people of Israell were in the wilderness, and were destitute of the vsual helps of tillage, the Lorde gaue them bread from heauen

heauen to eate : but as soone as they came  
 into the promised lande the Man ceased,  
 neither had the children of Israel Man any  
 more. **Euery man was then to fall to his** Iosh. 5, 12  
**wozke, and not to hope by those extraor-**  
**dinarie meanes to be relæued. To streng-**  
**then the faith of Hezekiah, the Lorde saide**  
**to him, Thou shalt eate this yeare such as**  
**groweth of it selfe, and the second yeare** Isay. 37, 30  
**such things as growe without sowing, but**  
**in the third yeare, sow ye, and reape, and**  
**plant, &c. He that (those two yeres being**  
**expired) had trusted to the sojner cour-**  
**ses, neglecting husbandry, out of al doubt**  
**he might haue bene starued : and yet be-**  
**foze, he that had called Gods power, to**  
**furnish them with foode without sowing,**  
**into question, had bene woorthy to be pu-**  
**nished. In the beginning of the worlds** Gen. 1, 3  
**creation, God for the manifesting of his** 11, 14  
**owne power and glory made light to be,**  
**& the earth to bud forth, before the Sunne**  
**(which to vs is the fountaine of light,**  
**and the cherisher of the vitall heat which**  
**is in all things) was created : yet now,**  
**God hauing established an orderly**  
**course we cannot hope either of light**  
**in the ayre, or for life among the crea-**  
tures

Rom. 8, 29  
Act. 13, 48

luk. 11, 52  
1er. 18, 18

Amo 8, 12

tures vpon the earth without the Sun.  
I do apply al these things thus: the want  
of the meanes of publike preaching in  
former ages, could not be any hindrance  
vnto God in sauing those which he knew  
before, and who were ordained vnto eter-  
nall life And I am out of doubt of it, that  
in the dayes of Popery in this land, whe  
the key of knowledge was vtterly taken a-  
way; and the law perished from the priest,  
counsell from the wise, and the word from  
the Prophet, so that if a man did wander  
from sea to sea, and did run to and fro from  
the North euen vnto the East to seeke the  
word of the Lord, yet he could nor find it.  
I say, I am cleere in it, that many then in  
that great darknes, did (as y<sup>e</sup> prouerbe is)  
see day at a very litle hole, & very stragely  
came to the knowledge of the truth, some  
by the sight of some parcells of scripture,  
some by the writings of good men, som by  
conference with others, though the same  
were both very seldoin & very secret, some  
by knowing little more then the Lordes  
prayer in English, & yet had they y<sup>e</sup> assu-  
rance of the truth of it, & felt that cōfort, &  
receiued y<sup>e</sup> sweetnesse by it, that (as the hi-  
stories of the church make mention) they  
were

were contented to sacrifice their liues, & to spend their best blood to beare witness vnto it: which y<sup>e</sup> Lord did, both that it might appeare to all ensuing ages, y<sup>e</sup> he reserued a small remnant, euen as the shepheard taketh out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a peece of an eare, then when as the daughter of Sion was become as Sodome, and not much vnlike vnto Gomorrha; and withal, y<sup>e</sup> at the day of Christs appeering, when he shal consume that man of sin with the breath of his mouth, and abolish him with the brightnes of his coming, he may haue witnesses against him out of all ages, both of y<sup>e</sup> deceiuablenes of his superstitious doctrine, and of the cruelty of his tyranous and bloudy proceedings. That which I say touching the times of the Egyptian darknes of Popery, may be said also of many parts of the Realme, which notwithstanding the long flourishing of the Gospell in this land, yet (I know not through whose default) neuer enjoyed the benefit & comfort of settled preaching: for though for the most parte it bee true, that where the Lorde hath much people, there he is not waiting to send some, who may continue with them, and teach the

Isay 1, 9  
Amo. 3, 12

1 The. 2, 8

Act. 18, 1

of God among them, yet as he sometimes vouchsafeth a Preacher to impudent and stiff-necked children, who will not heare  
 Ezec. 2, 4, 5 to that end, that in the day of vengeance they may know there hath bene a Prophet among them: so also it pleaseth him by secret and hidden, yea and very unlikely courses, to afforde vnto some hearts the blessing of inward conuersion, vpon whom he hath not bestowed the benefit of outward instruction by a Preacher. But what then? Yet this remaineth certaine, that as when the good meanes is wanting, and cannot by any meanes be procured, the power and mercie of God must not be distrusted: so when the meanes is bestowed, his bountie cannot without great sin be despised. It is herein, as it is in the case of the Sacraments: it is not simply the want of them (when a man cannot, though faine he would, become partaker of them) but the contempt which is damnable. As for example, if a father vnneccessarily deferre the baptism of his child longer then the time appointed by the order of the Church, it is a sin in him, if the child die without baptism: so likewise for a man vsually

usually to turne his back from the administration of the Lords Supper, making no reckning of the comfort offered therein, it is doubtlesse a fault, which God will not let to goe away unpunished. The same may be saide of the worde preached, if a man be depriued of it through a kinde of vnauoydable necessitie, simply there is no preiudice to his saluation thereby, if so be these things be ioyned with it: first, that in this strait, the soule do pant *Psal. 42, 1* after that greate benefit of which it is depriued: secondly, that a man doe both desire & require that one thing of the Lorde, even to beholde the beautie of the Lorde, *Psal. 27, 4* namely the light of the glorious Gospel of *2 Cor. 4, 4* Christ, which is the image of God: thirdly, that he be carefull to vse all such helps of reading the scripture, and of other godly treatises, and of conference with men of knowledge, as may possibly be procured. But if so be a man may by any meanes enioy the benefite and comforte of preaching, though it be with some both charge and trauell: if then he carelessly neglect it, and trust to other meanes, no doubt the Lorde will curse those meanes vnto him, which for all that in their owne nature



are good, and might profite, if they were not vbled with contempt of the principal. This is my iudgment touching this supposall, that by pressing the worth of preaching, wee doe confine as it were Gods grace, and tie it to our tongues, & doe cut them short of all hope of saluation, which by anye occasion haue liued or doe liue without it.

*Nymp.* VVel sir, this kind of men for al this is not satisfied, but beeing beaten by argument and scripture from one fond conceit, they forthwith run to another, & seek not so much how to make a direct reply, as to heap vp diuersitie of obiections. And therefore when they haue said all they can, for the pressing of those particulers, the vanity whereof you haue layed open to the full; then (hoping to obtaine that with multitude of words, which with waight of reason they cannot) they will needs know a reason why there may not bee as much good gotten by their owne priuate reading in the bookes of the scripture, and in other good sermons and treatises which are set forth, as by hearing a Preacher in the Church.

*Epaph.* Touching priuate reading of the



the scripture, I am so far from dislikinge it any waye, that with that learned Chrysostome I doe alwayes exhort, and will not faile in stirring vpp the people, that they shoulde not onely dilligently attend to matters spoken publikely, but endeuour themselves also to reade and peruse y<sup>e</sup> scriptures priuately. God forbid, I or any other of my profession, shoulde maintaine that Popish Maxime, that the common vse of the Scripture is the cause of all heresies; and not rather the contrarie taught by Christe, and seconded by the learned in Gods Church, namely, that the cause of all euill, whether it be error in iudgement, or corruption in manners, is the ignorance of the Scripture. We might well reioyce in the happinesse of our times, if we might be occasioned by our peoples experience in the booke of God, to say as one saide of old: Thou may (saith hee) see commonly our opinions and rules of religion to bee helde and maintained not onely by the maisters of the Church and teachers of the people, but euen by Smithes and Shoomakers, and husbandmen, and hedgers, and heard-men,

*Chrys. homil. 5  
de Lazaro.*

*Alphos. de Ca-  
stro lib. 3. c. 6  
de inst. puxit.  
harer.*

*Matth. 22, 29  
Chrys. Homil. 9  
in epist. ad Col.*

*Theodoret li. 5  
de correge-  
nd. Gra. affectib.*

*Hofius de sacro  
vernacule  
legendo.*

Rom. 10, 14  
Ephe. 4, 12

Actes 9, 6.

yea and by women and seamsters: the comfort which we shoulde take here in, should make vs little to esteem the scoffes of Iudaelitish Papists, who obiect it to vs as a matter of disgrace, that we haue prophaned the Scripture by making it common to artificers and women. Now that which I say of the priuate readinge of the scripture, I say also of the perusing of godly treatises and sermons, & the like. I wish mens care in this kind encreased, and I know that thereby there commeth much comfort vnto Gods people. But yet I dare not to ascribe that to priuate exercises, which by the doctrine of the Scripture belongeth to the publike ministry, namely the begetting of faith, and the gathering together of the Saintes of God into his Church. I find in the holy history, the teaching by the ministerie of man to be preferred before those things, to which I suppose no man will dare to equal his owne priuate industry. When Christ called Paule from heauen, and Paul demanded, Lord what wilt thou that I doe? A man in reason woulde haue thought, that there coulde haue bene no more excellent means for Pauls instructiō, then

then if Christ shoulde haue discoursed to him with his owne mouth; yet to main-  
taine the credit of Gods ordinance, and  
to make knowne the blessing that fol-  
loweth it, Paule is commanded to depend  
vpon the ministry and direction of Ana-  
nias. Not much vnlike is that example of  
Cornelius: it pleased God to send an An-  
gell vnto him, to testifie vnto him the  
remembrance of his almes and prayers  
with the Lord: why then did not the same  
Angell proceed to instruct him in the mi-  
nistry of Christ? what credite woulde the  
words of so glorious a creature haue ca-  
ried: saith flesh & blood: and yet the Lord  
in his wisdom thought it y<sup>e</sup> most fitting  
course to put ouer Cornelius to the mini-  
stery of Peter, (Send me to Ioppa & cal for  
Simon, he shall tel thee what thou oughtest  
to do: ) to the end that it might appeare,  
that it pleaseth him to vse mans voice as  
his instrument, and to tie our faith vnto  
it. Shall any man dare to put his owne  
priuate courses of reading, into the bal-  
lance with publike preaching, when as  
it hath seemed good to the wisdom of  
God to preferre it (in regarde of mans  
vse) before the immediate teaching of  
Christ,

Acts 19.

verse 5, 6.

Caluin vpon  
that place.

Christe, or the instruction of an Angell? Christ a little before his death, among other things whereby he endeavored to comfort the hearts of his disciples, delivered to them this promise, Verily, verily, I say vnto you, he that beleueth in me, the workes that I do he shal do also, and greater then these shal he do. It was a promise made vnto the whole Church, neither peculiar to the Apostles, nor common to euery Christian. If any man demaund what be these greater workes, which shall be done by men, which Christ did not: I confesse with the learned, that it was in part verified in the myracles of the Apostles; as namely in that of Peter, who cured the diseased with his shadow, which may be thought greater then that of Christe, who healed with the touch of his garment: yet thereby was chiefly meant the conuersion of the worlde, by the preaching of the Gospel, to which it pleased our Sauioꝝ to depute his Apostles and their successors: a worke indeede far greater then any of those myracles which he wrought heere vpon earth by his owne immediate power. His worke it is, I confesse, the con-

uersion

Iohn 24, 12

Caluin vpon  
that place.

Aug. Tract. in  
Ioh. 71.

Chrys. Hom. 12  
in acta. Apost.

Acts 5, 15

Matth. 14, 36

Aug. tract. in  
Ioh. 72

Origen Hom. 6  
in Isa.

Cyri. Lt. 9. c. 41

uerſion of ſinners, (for neither is he that planteth any thing, neither hee that watereth yet he thought it moſt agreeing to mans infirmities and weakenesse, and the best meanes both for the furtherance of his owne glory, and the tryall of our obedience, to put men in the seruice of his Church, that they might pray the people in Christs ſted to be reconciled vnto God. 1 Cor. 3, 7

2 Cor. 5, 20

Who then can without great presumption, and no lesse contempt of Gods maiesty, rely vpon any other meanes for his spirituall edification, when as the Lorde hath thought it meete to put his words in the mouth of a man, and to be with it, the

Ierem. 1, 9

Exod. 4, 12

to speake from heauen by an immediate voice, or to employ those ministering spirits in that seruice, which notwithstandinge

Hebr. 1, 14

are sent forth for their sakes which shall bee heires of saluation? Great is the benefite of priuate readinge, especiallye of the booke of holye scripture: but yet, as giuing attendance to reading, in a Minister,

1 Tim. 4, 13

is to make him the better able to discharge his publike dutie, in exhortation and doctrine: so the chiefe end of priuate searching the Scripture by priuate me, is in respect of the publike ministerie, that

Chrys. homil. 3  
de Lazaro.

Acts 17, 11

that befoze hand they may bee pzeared to it, & afterwards may the better know how to pzoofit by it: for the former of these two (namely pzeparation by reading to the publike hearing); it is a fit saying of Chrysostome: *We doe* (saith he) oftentimes tell you befoze hande, the text whereof our purpose is to entreate, that in the meane while you (taking your booke, and weighing the summe and state of the place) may make your mindes fitter to receiue those points which shall after be deliuered. As indeed the ignorance of the people in the language of the scripture, and the generall course & storie of the Bible maketh pzeaching to be much lesse pzoofitable vnto them. Now for the latter, to wit, y<sup>e</sup> vse of priuat reading for pzoofite after hearing, we haue that memorable example of those worthy gentlemen of Berea, who hearing the Apostles preach, and receiuing the word with all readinesse, searched the scriptures daily whether those things were so.

*Nymp.* Why, but (may it be saide) is not the scripture the grounde and foundation of all your doctrine; and are you able to say more or to speake better then many both



both auncient and later learned men, whose excellent sermons are put in print, and whose godly treatises are extant for the benefite and comfort of Godes people?

*Epaph.* If we preach vnto you any other doctrine then that which the scripture will allow, we are worthy of Pauls curse; we knowe and confesse the Bible to be the most exact rule, and square, and canon, by which all our sermons must be tried: we acknowledge also that holy men which haue written touching matters of religion, and haue published their well labored, and zealously deliuered sermons, haue (many of them) set downe the truth of God soundly, and bene the meanes of much comfort to well affected people: but yet, though the doctrine be the same in substance, that is read priuately, & which is publikely deliuered, yet the like fruite cannot follow vppon both. If you demand a reason, I can giue no better then that which Christ gaue of Gods reuealing those things to babes, which hee hid from the wise and prudent, Euen so it is, because the Lord his good pleasure is such. When the people of Israell were in their

Gal. 1, 8.

Α' κριβ' 2ο 2ο 2ο,

2ο 2ο 2ο 2ο 2ο

Chrysost

homil. 13. in 2

Corinth.

Matth. 11, 26



Exod. 16, 20

Eccl. 24.

Prov. 8, 33

their iourney to Canaan, and were fedde  
 with bread from heaven: we reade that if  
 vpon the weeke daies any man had reser-  
 ued of the Manna till the morning, it was  
 full of wormes and stanke: but being kepte  
 the day before the Sabbath untill mo-  
 ning, it stanke not, neither was there any  
 woorme therein. I woulde faine see who  
 coulde giue me any other reason, why the  
 Manna shoulde at the one time corrupte,  
 at the other continue swæte, but onely  
 this: God shewed his power in preser-  
 uing it at the one time, because it was his  
 owne ordinance for the better sanctifying  
 the Sabbath, and hee shewed his iustice  
 in rotting it at the other time, because he  
 had forbidden it, to teach them to depend  
 vpon his prouidence. After the same sorte,  
 one man, he taking himselfe to be a wise  
 man, & thinking himselfe to be as able to  
 draw good matter out of the booke of the  
 scripture, and other writings, as the best  
 Preacher of them all, either contemneth  
 or else neglecteth the publike Ministerie.  
 Another, he in obedience to Gods com-  
 maundement, VVatcheth dayly at the  
 gates of the Lordes house, and giueth at-  
 tendance at the postes of his doores, fra-  
 ming

ming all his priuate readings and meditations to the fitting of himself for the assembly exercises. You will ask me, why should the knowledge of the former, rot (as it were) & putrifie & become nothing worth, he being a man of good capacitie & vnderstanding, and readinge none but sound authozs : and the other thzine in knowledge and in the power of godlines, that yet for all that learneth no other doctrine then the former findeth in his good bookes at home? I might happily, but verily for mine owne parte I will seeke noe other answer but this: God hath promised to blesse the latter course, saying, If thou cause thy eares to hearken vnto Prou.1,2,5  
wisdomes, and incline thine heart to vnderstanding ; then thou shalt vnderstande the feare of the Lorde, and find the knowledge of God. But for the other, because it is a course of mans owne deuising, sauouring of inward pride, therefore the Lord turneth it (as he doeth all humane wisdomes) into foolishnes : so y the know- 1 Cor.1,20  
ledge so gotten (I meane by another by-way, & not by that old trode path of hearing) either becometh as y Apostle speaketh, vaine iangling, or else if it be sound, 1 Tim.2,6  
in

in regarde of the apprehension of truth,  
yet it swimmeth onely in the braine, and  
neuer worketh to the renewing and sea-  
soning of the heart.

*Nymph.* There is yet one thing more  
touching this conceit which men haue, to  
gaine more by their owne priuate courses  
then by the publike ministry, and that is  
this: men that write, write with great deli-  
beration and aduice; as for you when you  
preach, you speake many times at aduen-  
ture, and nothing so iudicially as doe those  
who commit things to writing. Besides  
that, many of you are but nouices and *young*  
*schollers*, whom S. Paule seemeth not so wel  
to approue of. And for these causes, as they  
must needs be iealous of your iudgement  
in many things, so neither can they receiue  
that profit by your preaching, as they may  
by priuate reading.

1 Timo. 3, 6

*Epaph.* Alas, a poore excuse: it is true,  
if men write as they ought, they write  
with iudgement and heedfulnesse: and so  
doe they also preach with good aduice,  
who haue learned to feare him, that  
hath saide, Cursed be he which doeth the  
worke of the Lord negligently. I will not  
goe about to patronise the negligence  
and

Ier. 48, 10

and carelesnesse of any man : I wish wee  
 would all studie to shew our selues ap-  
 prooued vnto God ,workemen that need  
 not bee ashamed, diuiding the worde of <sup>2 tim. 2, 15</sup>  
 God aright : that so when the fire shall  
 trie euery mans worke of what sort it is, <sup>1 cor. 3, 13</sup>  
 ours may abide. Yet this I will saye,  
 that if you compare like with like, that  
 is, sound writers with sound preachers,  
 you shall find the sermons of the one, fra-  
 med with as good iudgement, as the  
 booke and writings of the other. And  
 if that bee a commendation (as I see no  
 reason but it should) for a mans labozes  
 to smell of the candle, no doubt you  
 shall perceiue euen the ordinarie exerci-  
 ses of painefull and conscionable Prea-  
 chers to sauour of as much art and in-  
 dustrie, as the treatises of your most  
 iudicious and grauest writers. Per-  
 uerthelesse, because as the Scripture  
 sayth, In many thinges we slippe al. both <sup>James 3, 2.</sup>  
 Preachers and writers, both readers  
 of bookes and hearers of sermons, there-  
 fore there is a necessitie of care and  
 iudgement of those that seeke to reape  
 benefite by other mens labours, that  
 like bees they may suck out the best and  
 sweetest,

Swéetest and most wholesome doctrine  
 from them both. Now for the youth of  
 manye Ministers, which men (as you  
 say) pleade, and seeme also to grounde  
 their conceit vpon the scripture: I an-  
 swer: first, that it is greatly to be lamen-  
 ted to see the ouerforwardnesse of manye  
 young men, who not considering the  
 weight of that holy calling, doe sodainely  
 thrust themselues into it, and vnder-  
 take (as the saying is) to teach others,  
 befoze they themselues are well instru-  
 cted; so that I do verily thinke, there are  
 not at this day moze nouices and pu-  
 nies of any profession, then there are of  
 the ministerie. And for the pzeuening  
 of this euill, were those decrees of the  
 auncient Councils, which set downe a  
 certaine age, befoze which a man was  
 not to be admitted to the office of a Mi-  
 nister or Bishoppe in the Church. Se-  
 condly, I adde this withall, that the gra-  
 ces of God are not to be limited to anye  
 age. It was a good distinction of the  
 Heathen man, betwixte a young man in  
 yeares, and a young man in conditions:  
 It is meete that younge men shoulde  
 saye with Elihu, The dayes shall speak,  
 and

*Prius ad do-  
 cendum, quā  
 ad discendū*

*Con. carth. 3  
 cap. 4*

*Con. Agat.  
 cap. 16*

*Con. Tolet. 4  
 cap. 17*

*Arist. Eth.  
 lib. 1.*

and the multitude of yeares shall teach  
 wisdom. And yet it must bee remem-  
 bred which is also there noted, that it is  
 the inspiration of the Almighty which <sup>verse 8,9</sup>  
 giueth vnderstanding, and that the aged  
 dooe not alwaye vnderstande iudgement.  
 Younger Dauid by the studie of Godes <sup>Pf. 119. C.</sup>  
 worde, maye come to vnderstande more  
 then the auncient. Paule biddeth Timothy <sup>1 tim. 4. 12</sup>  
 that noe man shoulde despise his youth.  
 If wee shall distinguish the age of man, <sup>Laert. lib. 8</sup>  
 according as some Philosophers did, <sup>in vita Py-</sup>  
 then Timothy coulde not bee aboue five <sup>thag.</sup>  
 and twentie when Paule so wrote vnto  
 him. Touching the place it selfe (that  
 a Bishop must not be a younge scholler)  
 it must not be vnderstood of a young man  
 in yeares, but of one lately conuerted <sup>Chryf. ob-</sup>  
 to the Christian faith, and newly plan- <sup>serueth</sup>  
 ted in the Church. Timothy liued in <sup>that Paule</sup>  
 Asia, and therefore was necessarilye to <sup>sayth not</sup>  
 furnish the Church out of Gentilisme: <sup>1607 but</sup>  
 for this cause Paule aduiseeth him to make <sup>1607 but</sup>  
 choise of such as were settled in the do-  
 ctine of Christianitie, and not to ad-  
 uance men to the dignitie of a Bi-  
 shoppe by and by after their conuersion.  
 So that, howsoever I confesse, that ma-  
 turity



turitie of yeares is to bee respected in a Minister, because in the ordinarie course it is accompanied with ripenesse of iudgement, yet neither doeth that place of the Apostle prescribe a lawe for the debarring of younge men from the ministry, neither doeth any place of scripture disable that age, or make it vncapable of the ministerie, so that it bee graced with giftes sufficient for so excellent a function. And this I thinke may be answer full enough to this objection.

*Nymph.* What exception these wise men will make against this your answer, I know not; you haue resolved me to the full: and concerning yong Ministers, I heard once an acquaintãce of mine, who was brought vp in the Vniuersitie, say, that he knew many schollers in his time, that when they were young and fresh, were of verie great hope, and were also very zealous, & had a good gift in preaching, who notwithstanding in time grew colde, and lesse able for gifts, both of iudgement and zeale, and vterance to doe good in Gods Church: but these pointes I will not mell with, onely your discourse brought that into my minde  
which



which I heard a friend of mine say a good while since. I must craue your iudgement yet a little further, touching these men; besides all these pretended reasons, they stand much vpon two thinges, which flesh and bloud doth well approue of: one is, that few of the great men of the worlde doe esteem preaching; the other is, that it is not wisdom for a man in matters of religion to bee too forward. What say you to this?

*Epaph.* I say, it is a harde matter for those men to come, to amendment out of <sup>2 Tim. 2, 16</sup> the snare of the diuell, which are taken of him at his will: and we had neede to beg of <sup>2 Cor. 4, 6</sup> that God, who commaundeth the light to shine out of darknes, that he would shine in our harts, to giue the light of his knowledge: for if a man be once entangled in error, Sathan hath so many deuises to hold him in, that it is a harde matter for him to get from him: yet if men haue any grace, or wil yeeld to any reason, they may sone see the vanitie of these perswasions, as I wil briefly declare vnto you. In the former there are two things to be noted: first, that if the practise of men were a sufficient rule in matters of Religion,

Iere. 15, 16

Rom. 1, 16

Iohn 7, 48

*maior pars vin-  
cit meliorem.*

Exod. 32.

there are (thankes bee to God) many ho-  
 norable personages, manye nobles, ma-  
 ny gentlemen, manye of god note for  
 worldly respects, who doe unfainedly re-  
 uerence and heartily embrace the prea-  
 ching of Gods worde, and no doubt it is  
 vnto them the ioy and reioycing of their  
 hearts, and they esteeme of it to bee euen  
 as it is, The power of God vnto saluation:  
 so that if the approbation of men were  
 a reason of force, it is not wantinge vnto  
 preaching: but. as God hath a people  
 out of all, so that also hath friendes and  
 fauourers among all. Secondly, sup-  
 pose that this course of Preaching were  
 vtterly despised, and all the great wise  
 men of the worlde did euen scoyne it,  
 and treade it vnder their fete, yet  
 this were a poore argument, vnlesse  
 wee will say, it was a good reason which  
 they vsed against Christe, Doeth anye  
 of the rulers or of the Pharisees beeleeue  
 in him? The best things haue not come  
 monly the most voices, and many times  
 accordinge to the prouerbe, the greater  
 parte is too harde for the better parte.  
 There was a voyce put vppe for making  
 a golden calse, and there was not one  
 against

against it. There was a voyce, what  
 shoulde bee done with Iesus, And all  
 cryed, Crucifie him. Another was Matthew 27.  
 whether God shoulde be God, or Baall  
 should be God: and none held with God 1 King. 18  
 but Eliah. Saint Augustine saith, that the  
 church was sometimes in one Abell, and Aug. psa. 128  
 in one Enoch: God forbid we shoulde bee  
οἱ πλείονες τῆς  
 ἐκκλησίας οὐκ  
 ἔστιν. Nazian.  
 in the number of those, who define the  
 church by the multitude; we are content  
 to leaue that absurditie to the Papistes:  
 we knowe that Chzistes flocke is a little  
 flocke; and wee must endeuor to grow to Luk. 12, 32  
 that resolution, to say, Lord, though that  
 all men shoulde bee offended by thee, yet Matt. 26, 33  
 will I neuer be offended. Now for that  
 other perswasion, that it is not good to be  
 too eager in matters of religion, I know  
 it to bee the common perswasion of a  
 great many: but yet this is a sure rule,  
 that that man who thinketh himselfe to  
 haue knowledge, and zeale, and religion  
 enough, the same hath noe knowledge,  
 no zeal, no religion at all. For where  
 soeuer the graces of God are in truth,  
 there is (in regarde of the sweetenesse Phil. 3, 13  
 which a man findeth in them) a for-  
 getting that which is behinde, and an

*Non quid ege-  
rus, sed quid su-  
per sit curan-  
dum: si dixi: sti-  
sufficit, dese-  
cisti.*

Matth. 25, 29

Luke 8, 18

*ubi incipis nol-  
le furi melior,  
ibi desinus esse  
bonus.*

1 Pet. 2, 2

verse 3

endeuouring a mans selfe to that which is before, griening moze for that which is yet wanting, then reioycing in that which already is attained. In the parable of the Talents, it is saide, that from him that hath not, euen that he hath shall be taken away: but in another of the Gospels it is said, From him shall bee taken euen that which it seemeth that hee hath. So that it is but a conceit and opinion of grace, where there is noe desire to increase in grace. It is a good saying; when a man is come to that passe that he hath no desire to be better, then he quite leaueth off to be good. And therefore men do but deceiue themselves, in neglecting the benefit of preaching, vpon a conceit, that it is best to keepe a temper in matters of religion, and to content themselves with a certaine portion of knowledge, and with a set measure of zeale, and neuer to procede further; for we must desire the sincere milke of the word, that we may grow thereby. And indeede if so bee that wee haue, tasted how bountifull the Lorde is wee shall neuer be able to satisfie our selues, either in the laboring after knowledge in religion,

or in the zealous profession and practise of religion.

*Nymph.* Now that you speake of being too forward and precise in matters of religion, it putteth me in mind of a saying of *Salomons*, which I well vnderstand not, *Be not thou* (saith hee) *iust ouermuch*. It maye seeme to agree with their opinion, which woulde not haue men to bee too strait, as they call it. Eccles. 7, 18.

*Epaph.* It is a good rule of the learned, Augustine. that for the finding out the true meaning of a place of scripture, we must consider what goeth before, and what followeth: this rule obserued will sone cleare this place. In the verse going before, *Salomon* had spoken of the confusion (as maye seeme) which is in the worlde: There is (saith he) a iust man that perisheth in his verse 17. iustice, and there is a wicked man that continueth long in his malice. Now to repressse the rash headinesse of mans disposition, which is ready to censure Gods courses at pleasure, the wise man addeth this, *Be not thou iust ouermuch*: that is, Beware thou take not vpon thee, vnder pretence of iustice, to charge these courses of Gods prouidence with iniustice.

At

Jer. 12, 1

It was an error we knowe, that Dauid by his owne confession had welneare fallen into. And Ieremie the Prophet, craued leaue of God that hee might talke with him of his iudgement: he could hardly at the first satisfie himselfe in it, how God coulde bee iust, and yet suffer them to bee in wealth that rebelliously transgresse. This taring of Gods proceedings in the gouerning of the world, is (I take it) chiefly forbidden in this precept, Bee not iust ouermuch: and this to my seeming is the meaning of that place: howsoeuer it be taken (as I know some otherwise interprete it) yet I am sure it condemneth not that warie and zealous course in the practise of Religion, which though the world is pleased to call ouerholinesse, yet I am well aduised the scripture vrgeth, biddinge vs to walke circumspectly or exactly, and by a rule and to abstaine from all apperaunce of euill.

Ephes. 5, 15  
*Christus accu-*  
*rate. gal. 6, 16*

1 Thes. 5, 22

Isay 3, 9

Deut. 23, 19

*Nymp.* The Lorde in his mercye enable vs so to doe: for surely the wicked and vngodly, as they are bolde in euill, so that the very triall of their countenance testifieth against them, so also they doe adde drunkennesse

nesse to thirste, labouring to growe to a kind of perfection in vngodlinesse. And therefore great shame shall it bee for vs, who *professe to knowe God*, to waxe cold and fainte hearted, and timorous in the duties of pietie, and not to strue rather *to go from strength to strength*, and to increase in holinesse, as fast as prophane godles men thriue in iniquitie. Titus 1, 16 Psal. 84, 7

I haue hitherto (as farre as my experience in obseruing, and my memorie in recounting hath enabled mee) propounded vnto you the seuerall obiections against preaching, vrged ordinarilye by three sorts of men; the grossely ignorant, the wretchedly prophane, and the wordly wise; and you haue (I thanke you) opened vnto me the blindnesse of the firste, the vilenesse of the second, and the vanitye of the last. The contentment that I haue receiued by your discourse hitherto, maketh me to presume further vpon you, and to request your patience in hearinge, and your skill in resolving some exceptions made by a fourth sorte of men : last in order, but not least in argument, because they are by education learned, and by profession (some of them) Ministers



sters and preachers, and yet do not altogether fauour those courses of preaching, which some doe magnifie so exceedingly.

*Epaph.* Neighbor (to say nothing of my dutie) I am bound by my promise to endeuor to satisfie you: and howsoever I am of Hieroms mind and am vnwilling to oppose my selfe against any learned men of mine owne profession, least I shoulde seeme desirous of contention: yet because the trueth is to be preferred before all other respects, and to giue titles is a thing so dangerous, therefore I will forget all thinges which mighte hinder me in free speaking that which in my conscience I am verily perswaded is the trueth, and will set before me only the glorie of God, and the common good and benefite of his Church.

The exceptions of some seeming learned.

*Nymph.* Being then assured of your readinesse, I will tell you what I haue marked partely out of the speeches, partly out of the sermons of some that are reputed learned men: I am no scholler, and therefore you must not expecte any precise order at my hands: yet to my seeming their exceptions are either against preaching it selfe,

or

or against the manner of it, as by some it is performed.

*Epaph.* Your methode is good enough: But doe you know any professing the ministerie, which do utterly mislike and disallow preaching.

*Nymphas.* I doe not say so: for they who are the most eager in this matter, if you fall to reasoning with them, cannot for shame but say, that preaching is the moste ordinarie and vsual meanes which God vseth to worke by in the heartes of the hearers: and againe, that preaching doeth profite more then reading. And yet for al that in their ordinarie discourse they make knowne their opinion thus, that the word of God is as effectuell when it is reade, as when it is preached, and that reading is preaching.

*Epaph.* Certainly I cannot but maruaile, that menne of learning and professed Diuines, shoulde undertake the maintenance of such an opinion, yea though it were but for their credits sake: for put this case, that in the vacancie of an Ecclesiasticall prefermente, there were ioynte suters for it, a man of note & quality, that hath spent many yeeres in studie,  
and

and runne through the whole circle of sciences, and is graced also with degrees of schooles, the testimonie of his deserte: and another an ordinarie fellowe, that hath had but reasonable breeding, and no seasoning but in a countrey schoole, and therefore is able to doe little perhaps saue onely reade faire, and go by his Rubricke: thinke you that your Uniuersitie scholler would not thinke himselfe greatly wronged, and growe into a maruellous discontentment if that other shoulde bee preferred before him: yes doubtlesse: he would renew that olde complaint of Salomons, and say, Folly is set in great excellencie, I haue seene seruants on horses, & Princes walking as seruants on the ground. He would say, it were enough for such a one as he, if he were appointed to some lower office in y<sup>e</sup> church, where he might eate a morfel of bread: and that if he were so well prouided for, as was Michah his Leuite, with ten shekels of siluer by the yeare, and a sute of apparel, and his meate and drinke, surely then hee were as well preferred as he deserueth. Like to these, would be the priuy thoughts of a well deseruing scholler, beeing disappointed of his

Eccl. 10, 6, 7

1 Sam. 2, 36.

Judg. 17, 10

his hoped preferment, by so vnworthy a competitor. And for mine owne parte, I thinke him to haue very iust cause so to complaine. But yet this being held for a truth, that reading is as effectuall as preaching, and that an ordinary man may doe as much good, saue as manye soules, draw as great a multitude to heauen with his distinct readinge, as the other with all his vniuersitie learning and long labored for Diuinity, surely then the scholler hath no reason to thinke himself wronged in missing his preferment: for why should there be a disparitie in reward, where there is no great precedence in respect of the possibilitie to doe good in Gods Church? So that I say, me thinks if it were for no other cause, yet men of learning and Preachers by profession, should neuer go about to equall bare and naked reading vnto preaching.

*Nymph.* This maye perhappes be some reason in policy: but I hope you haue some better prooffe then this for the matter: otherwise I know what the world wil saye, (euen that which it spareth not to speake already) that you Preachers are so earnest in the extolling of preaching, onelye for  
your

your owne priuate credits sake, that you may be the better esteemed.

*Epaph.* God be thanked, variety of sufficient proofes is not wanting in this cause; but yet this I thought good to obserue, as it were by the way, to the ende that men (who it may be haue a good opinion of their owne well deseruing) may see what an inconuenience is like to follow by the defence of such an opinion.

*Nymph.* I am very desirous to hear what may be said in this case touching the comparison that is made betwixt reading and preaching, and therefore I do euen long til you come vnto it.

*Epaph.* Well then (to cut off all preambles and vnnecessary circumstances) for this pointe touching the efficacy of preaching aboue reading, I will stande vpon two reasons chiefly: the one is experience, the other is Gods ordinance, who hath appointed the ability to preach, as a matter of necessity in euery one that is called to the ministry.

Experience is sometimes called the mistresse of foles, but by it in this pointe wise men may learne a good lesson: first of all, if there be a biewe taken of all the places

places & parishes where there hath bene  
 onely reading, and of those which haue  
 bene furnished with a settled preaching  
 Minister, whose care hath bene to diuide <sup>2 tim. 2, 15</sup>  
 the word of truth aright: the different e-  
 state of the places wil soone make known  
 the worth of preaching aboue readinge:  
 for looke into those who haue euer rested  
 themselues satisfied with a reading Mi-  
 nister, neither seeking nor caring for bet-  
 ter meanes of instruction, and you shall  
 find generally wofull ignorance, lamen-  
 table blindnesse in the matters of God,  
 men altogether children in vnderstanding, <sup>1 co. 14, xx</sup>  
 popish, superstitious, heathenish, in one  
 word (to speake with the Apostle) Wal- <sup>Eph. 4, 17</sup>  
 king in the vanitie of their minde, hauing  
 their cogitation darkned, and being stran-  
 gers from the life of God through the ig-  
 norance that is in them, because of the  
 hardnes of their hearts. This is the gene-  
 rall condition of such places. But looke  
 againe to those, who haue bene taught in <sup>Gal. 6, 6</sup>  
 the word, & haue made conscience to pro-  
 fit by the good meanes wherewith God  
 hath blessed them, there shall you see the  
 scale of the ministrye, euen the conuer-  
 sion of soules, comfortable knowledge & <sup>1 Cor. 9, 2</sup>  
 A conscion.

Ephes. 6, 4  
Philem 2,

2 Tim. 2, 3  
Ioh. 16, 33  
Ioh. 15, 19  
Mat. 5, 11

conscionable carriage, the Lordes Saboth sanctified, his word accounted pretious, the sacraments reuerently vsed, priuate families trained vp in instruction and information of the Lord, & euen a very church in euery house. I know indeede that there are manye good people dwelling in parishes wanting preaching, and many ignorant and vngodly ones in places well furnished with teaching, but yet let these circumstances noted by me be remembred, of resting wel enough satisfied with bare reading, and of reioycing in the benefite of an able preacher, & then it wil be found true which I haue saide, and be a sufficient testimony of the power of preachinge aboue reading. Secondly, whereas the scripture is a witnes of the bad opinion which the world will haue of y<sup>e</sup> ministry of the word, assuring them that are called to that office, that the faithfull discharge of their duty shal be rewarded with affliction, with hatred, with all maner of euill sayings; let any man examine his owne obseruation, and see in which of the two, the Reader or the Preacher, this is best verified. It is an olde saying, that by the market folkes you shall vnderstand how the



the market goeth. Take mee therefore a common man whom you meet by chance and question with him touching the place where he dwelleth, & about his minister: if he be but a Reader, you shall haue him say strait, Truly we haue a good honest quiet man, mary indeed he cannot preach, but he liueth peaceably, & medleth with no mā, & is very wel beloued amongst vs: for why, he is a fellowlike man, &c: but put case y minister be a painfull preacher, one that seeketh to draw the people from their godlesse and superstitious courses, to the knowledge of God, then you shall heare him in another tune; he wil say thē, there we haue a man, some say he is learned, but sure I am he hath troubled vs all, a good many of vs wish he had neuer come amongst vs, we were all quiet befoze, but now all is out of frame, there is such reprobuing & finding of fault, & bringing vp of new fashions & orders, that we know not what to do. some of the best of our parish will doe what they can to remoue him: these & the like are y thoughts and speeches of no small many, and the same no foolles in the eyes of the worlde, who doe indeed iustifie preaching by con-

denning it, & shew it to be the power of God by resisting it. Thirdly, for one other specialty drawn fro experience: I wil appeale vnto mens consciences, whether they be such as feare God or otherwise. They which feare God, & tremble at his words, & do in humility desire to know the secret of the Lord cannot but acknowledge, that they doe much more increase both in the knowledge of the truth, which is according to godlines, and in the power of godlines, doe finde their iudgements better strengthened, their faith more confirmed, their consciences more wrought vpon, & their affections more quickened by the worde when it is effectually preached & applied, then when it is but only read vnto them. And no maruell, for indeede it cannot be, y a brieft clause of holy scripture, wherein in a shorthe tenor of wordes (such is the riches of the sacred text) many perticulars are comprised, being onely reade, shoulde profit so much, as if by preaching it were expounded, and according to occasions applied vnto Gods people. If a man (sayth the heathen Orator) come into a warderobe, where many rich garments are folded vppe together in a narrowe come, it cannot

Isay. 66, 2  
Psa. 25, 14

Titus 1, 1  
2 Tim. 3, 5

Cic. de Orat  
lib. 1

cannot so satisfie him, as if he saime might  
seuerally be laide forth to his viewe, time  
being graunted to take notice of euerie  
particular: because being lapped vpp, he  
cannot see the whole beautie, and being  
together, hee is not able to obserue euerie  
specialitie: euen so it fareth with the scrip-  
tures: if a man heare them read, it cannot  
but draw him to admire the maiestie and  
riches of them, and it will cast some glim-  
mering light vpon the vnderstanding: but  
when he heareth them laid open by prea-  
ching, it will much more astonish him, it  
will euen ravishe him as it were, casting a  
clearer light vpon his iudgemente, & wo-  
king more mightily vppon his affections.  
This truth, all which truly feare God are  
able to iustifie out of their own experiēce.  
Nowe for others, I know they also must  
yeeld to this, that they find. y<sup>e</sup> worde being  
vrged and pressed by preaching, to bee far  
more powerfull, more piercing, more ma-  
iestticall, more awaking the conscience,  
more entring through, euen vnto the diui-  
ding a sunder of the soule & the spirit, more  
discerning the thoughtes and the intents of  
the heart: and this is my first reaso fetched  
fro experience, against which there can be

Heb 4, 12.

no disputing: for it is in vaine to go about to perswade a man that y<sup>e</sup> thing is not so, w<sup>h</sup> he by obseruatiō hath stil found to be so.

*Nymph.* I haue wel marked your speech & duly considered the course of your argument: and as I am wel strengthened by it in that good opiniō which I haue alwaies had of preaching, so I am glad of one thinge which I obserued in your discourse, namely that you seem not altogether to condemne reading, nor to desire the banishing of it out of the Church. I can tell you, it is commonly said that you and others such as you are, do mislike the reading of the scriptures.

*Epaph.* God forbid that I or any man should holde so grosse an error, as to condemne a course of that antiquitie: Moses was read in the synagogue euery Sabbath day; & there was the lecture of the Law & Prophets: And our Saniōr Chriſt coming into y<sup>e</sup> synagogue on the Saboth day, stood vp to reade And for mine owne part, I agree to the opiniō of a learned man of our later times, that reading of y<sup>e</sup> holy scriptures in the congregation is good, to that end, that the phrase & maner of speakinge of y<sup>e</sup> scripture, & the scripture it self might be more knowne & more familiar to the people:

Act. 15, 21  
Acts 12, 15  
*Auguſtine.*

Luke 4. 16  
Bucer vpon  
Ephes. cap. 4.

The vse of  
reading the  
scrip. in the  
Church.

people: and I confesse also with him, that by that meanes the iudgment of the people is confirmed in al points of religio, so that thereby they are made able to iudge of the interpretation of the scriptures and of the doctrine taught them by their owne teachers or others: all this I willingly acknowledge. And howsoever me are disposed to interpret it, yet y<sup>e</sup> which is spoke in the praise of preaching, tendeth rather to the countenancing then to the disgrace of reading: for he who obserueth it shall find, y<sup>e</sup> none in priuate examine the scripture more carefully, none in publike hear it read more respectiue, then those who preaching hath taught to see y<sup>e</sup> excellencye of Gods word, & the worth of y<sup>e</sup> scripture.

*Nymphas.* You haue done very well to make knowne your iudgement touchinge the reading of the scripture; for the cōccit, that you thinke basely of the word read, is a great preiudice to you in many places, and in many mens opinions. If it please you, come now I pray you to your secōd reaso.

*Epaph.* The second reason which I haue for the maintaining the efficacy of preaching aboue reading, is grounded vppon the abilitie to preache, which the Lord

requireth in euerie Minister . For this being taken for graunted, that the Lord would both in the riches of his loue, and the depth of his wisdome set downe that course which shoulde be most for the behoofe of his Church: it must needs followe that if he haue not thoughte it sufficient for a Minister to be able to reade, but to perfourme some farther dutie of instructing, then surely there is somethinge more in preaching then in reading, and more profite like to followe by opening the text, then by bare propounding it.

*Nymph.* Your reason is good, if you be able to proue it; for it seemeth to some a hard doctrine, to say that God requireth euery minister in the Church to be able to preach, and therefore I wish you may be able to make it good.

*Epaph.* How hard soeuer and incredible it may seeme to some, yet I doubt not but to proue it, especially if wee will bee content to stand to the iudgement of the scripture, and to that sure word, as S. Peter calleth it; endeavouring by a reuerent kind of examination, to search out the secret and hidden meaning of Gods spirit. And first of all, I will place in the front

ἡ διότι οὐκ  
ἔστιν ἐν τῇ  
ἐκκλησίᾳ, Bas. e. 80

2 Pet. 1, 19  
δοτε λαλοῦμεν.  
Epip. h. e. 76  
Νῦν καὶ κρυμμένον  
ἐκκαλύπτει.  
Bas. de spiri-  
tu sanct. cap. 1

as



as it were of this p<sup>ro</sup>se, that wort<sup>h</sup>ie  
place in the tenth chapter of the Epistle  
to the Romanes, How shall they beleeue  
in him of whom they haue not heard, and  
how shall they heare without a Preacher,  
and how shall they preach except they bee  
sent? The summe of the place is this: that  
the hearing of a Preacher which is sent,  
is the ordinary meanes ordained of God  
to beget faith. From thence ariseth ano-  
ther point: that he whose ministry must  
be the meanes and instrument to beget  
faith, must be a man sent; for How can  
they preach except they be sent? onely that  
man is a preacher, which is sent. Now  
if we shall examine what it is to be sent,  
it will appeare to be true, that a suffici-  
ent minister to cal Gods people, must be  
a man of better qualitie then a bare rea-  
der of the Scripture. To be sent there-  
fore is this, to be appointed and depu-  
ted of God, and (as the Lorde speaketh  
of Ieremie) sanctified, or (as Paule say<sup>s</sup> *apostolus* Ieremy 1, 5.  
eth of himselfe) put a parte to that seruice. *Rom. 1, 1*  
Where it not nowe a presumptuous and  
ouerbold imputation of a certaine disso-  
lute carelesnes vnto the wisest and most  
prouident God, to saye or thinke that hee  
would



1 Tim. 1, 12  
Ephes. 4, 12

Prover. 26, 6

would put any man in his seruice, for the worke of the ministry, vnlesse the same were so gifted and qualified, as is meete for the discharge of so weighty a businesse? Salomon saith, that He that sendeth a message by the hand of a foole (that is, of a man vnable to deliuer the tenor of his message, and to open it to him to whom it is sent) is as hee that cutteth off the feete. It is as if he should bid a man go, and yet chop off his feete wherewith he should trauel. A Prince purposing an ambassage to another Prince, thinketh it not enough that the man whom hee will employ in that seruice, be able to carry his errand written in a paper, and faithfully to deliuer it according to directions (for that euerye ordinarie Currier and common Post may doe) but he maketh choise of one that hath had the best breeding, a man of good vnderstandinge, of good discourse, of good behauior, and of no lesse discretion, who is in these respects able to debate and manage those great affaires, as may be most for the behoefe and honozable aduantage of him that sendeth him. Shall we think God to be lesse carefull for the businesse of his Church,

church, then earthly Princes be for their State causes? Shall a man of the best qualitie be sought out for the carrying of a message from one man to another? and shall one of the meanest sufficiencie 2 Cor. 5, 18 haue the ministerie of reconciliation betwixte God and man giuen vnto him? God forbid. Let all these things then be put together: First, that he whose ministry shall be the meanes to breed faith, is a man sent, which the text auoucheth. Secondly, that to be sent, is to be gifted in that measure, as is agreeing to the waight of so great a calling, which common sense will not suffer vs to deny. Thirdly, that to be able only to reade y<sup>e</sup> scripture, is a common gift, and a facultie of no great note, which euery man well knoweth. Let these things I say be put together, Eccles. 4, 12 and you shall finde them as a three-fold corde, not easily broken, binding vp and strengthening this truth, that the man not graced with any more then the power to reade, is not the Minister appointed by God for the working of faith in the hearts of his people. Again, to presse this place yet further, this is the constant doctrine of the scripture, that  
no

no Minister can haue comfort in the daye  
of the Lord, but only he which is able to  
Ierem. 17, 16 say with Ieremie, I haue not thrust my self  
in for a Pastor. For wo shall be vnto those  
Ierem. 23, 21 of whom the Lord shall say, I haue not  
1 Tim. 3, 1 sent these Prophets, yet they ran. So that  
it standeth every man vpon, who desi-  
reth that worthy worke, the office of an  
ouerseer in Gods Church, to be wel assu-  
red of his calling, least in the daye of sur-  
ney it be said vnto him as was said vnto  
the guest without the wedding garment,  
Mat. 21, 12 Friend how comest thou hither? Or as to  
Psal. 50, xvi. the wicked in the Psalm, V What hast thou  
to do to declare mine ordinances, that thou  
shouldest take my couenant in thy mouth?  
Now, by what meanes can a man know  
himselſe to bee sent and called of God to  
the seruice of his church? there is no reue-  
lation to bee looked for, neither is it to bee  
expected that God shoulde call by some  
immediate voice, as he did v. Prophets,  
or as he did Paul: & yet there is a meanes  
and course as certaine heerein, as if the  
Lord should say directly by a voice soun-  
ding in our eares, Go, beholde haue not I  
sent thee? It is in this matter, as it is in  
that of election. A man that is carefull  
(accor.

according to the rule of the holy Ghost) to make his calling and election sure, must not presume to search the unsearchable counsels of God, neither yet waite for some speciall intelligence from heaven, but he must enter into his owne heart, and rise vp by degrees from the fruites of sanctification to his being iustified, from iustification to his effectuall calling, from thence to election, and from all these conclude eternal glorification in Gods kingdom: this is a sure course, to be ledde by the streames vppe to the well heade. Not much vnlike is the course in iudging of a mans calling to the ministerye. I may in some sort applye the spæche of Paule in another case to this purpose: Saye not thou that affectest the ministerye, who shall ascend vppe into heaven, to assure mee what is Gods purpose touching mee: for there is another waie, The testimonie of thy being sent (if thou art sent) is neare thee, euen in thy mouth, and in thy heart. Inquirie must bee made by a man in this behalfe, in what measure God hath fitted him to bee a minister of the newe Testament. Now may a man with a safe conscience, or  
with

2 Pet. 1, 10

Rom. 10, 6 ]

2 Cor. 3, 6

Matt. 9, 38

Col. 1, 27

Rom. 10, 15,

with any good grounde make himselfe  
beloeue that God hath sent him, and  
called him to the ministry, because hee is  
able to reade distinctly the text of holye  
scripture? Can this one facultie be a suf-  
ficient testimonie to a mans owne soule,  
that he is one of the appointed labourers  
for Gods haruest? Shall a man aduen-  
ture to vndertake the cure and care of  
soules vppon so slender preparation?  
Surely (for as much as I can conceiue)  
the doctrine of the Scripture, describing  
the office of a Minister, is againste it.  
This vse I haue made of this place:  
the summe is this: the ordinary meanes  
to beget faith, is the hearing of a Prea-  
cher sent, that is, so furnished with giftes  
sutable to his calling, that both in re-  
spect of the tenor of his message, and  
his abilitie, to manifest the riches of the  
glorious mylerie of Christ his very secrete  
may deserue to be called Beautifull: but  
neither is bare reading to bee numbred  
among those giftes which might argue  
a man to be sent, neither is it safe for  
any man to aduenture vppon no better  
sufficiencie. Therefore there is more  
required in him who must be hearde for  
the

the bréedinge of faith, then the naked facultye of delinering to the people out of a booke the letter of the Scripture.

*Nymph.* But by your leaue sir, that which you speake touching sending, I feare mee how it will be well taken: for hath not the Church the power of sending and calling to the Ministry? If then a man able onely to reade the scripture, be by the Church appointed to that office, is not that a sufficient warrant to him in this case?

*Epaph.* The calling by the Church, I acknowledge to bee so necessarie, that without it (a settled forme of Church gouernement being established) no man is to be reputed a lawfull Minister, though he be otherwise of neuer so great sufficiency. God I know calleth men extraordinarily sometimes, as namely, in the first founding & planting of the Church: so were the Apostles and Euangelists called: and when the Church of God is defaced, & an vniuersall Apostasie spreade ouer it; so it is thought they were called who restozed the sinceritie of religion, after the long night of Popery. But this extraordinary kinde of calling neuer taketh



keth place but when ordinarie callinge faileth, Now though the calling and allowance of the Church is necessary, yet it is not sufficient to the being of a minister. The office of the Church is onely to approue, it is God that maketh a minister. And therefore the Church is tied to a law, to lay hands sodainly vpon no man, but to proue first, and to vse a very precise examinatio before they separate any man to the office of a minister. The Churches duty is to search out what men the Lorde hath chosen, to take a part in the ministracion. I know there may be an error committed herein, and men in their choises and elections may be deceiued. It fareth many times with the gouernors of the Church, as it did with Ioab in the campe. When Absolom was slain, & the army of those which ioyned with him in the conspiracie was ouerthrowne, Ioab was purposed by a messenger to informe Dauid of the successe of the battel: hereupon one Ahimaaz offered himselfe to bee the carier of tidings: Ioab put him back, taking another, one Cushie to bee the fitter for that seruice. Ahimaaz notwithstanding continued to importune Ioab, what

1 Tim. 5, 22

1 Tim. 3, 10

ἀρετὴν καὶ ἠλικίαν  
Act. 1, 25

2 Sam. 18



(I pray thee) if I run also after Cush? And againe, Yet what if I run? And neuer left untill he had obtained licence to run also. Having gotten this leaue to run, he ran by the way of the plaine and ouer-went Cush, and came first to Dauid and made wise, as if he coulde haue tolde great tydings. But when the King came to particulars, then he was silent, I sawe a great tumult, but I knew not what. The case so standeth many times in the church. The spiritual Iobabs, the leaders of Gods people, intend perhaps to send none but Cushies, men of whose faithfulness and sufficiencie they haue good experience: but yet happely some Ahimaaz or other, some that might well stayer to beare tidings another time, steppeth in and putteth forward himselfe, and by importunitie purchaseth that which otherwise desert could not obtaine, and so runneth by the waye of the plaine (that common and too much troden path of Symony) and ouer-goeth the worthier; and being first come into the face of Gods Church, seemeth to be able to bring out of his treasure, thinges both old and new. But if you grow with him into particulars, you shall finde him

like

Heb. 13. 7.

Math. 13. 52.

Mat. 22, 12 like the guest in the Gospel, euen speech-  
 lesse, so that he must be faine to stand aside  
 till Cushi cometh to resolute you. Thus  
 I say an error may happen, and an over-  
 sight may be committed euen by the best  
 Overseers. But when this negligence be-  
 commeth a custome, and it wareth an or-  
 dinary matter, to make of the lowest of  
 the people Priests of the high places, so  
 that in a manner who will may consecrate  
 himselfe. then a man may well crye with  
 Dauid, It is time for thee Lorde to worke :  
 Arise, O God, and lift vp thine hand And  
 how feareful a thing it is, for those which  
 willingly suffer it, maye appeare by an  
 example not much vnlike. God sent Sa-  
 muel to annoint one of Ishai his sons, to  
 be King ouer Israel: Samuel seeing Eliab,  
 because of his countenance and the height  
 of his stature, said, Surely the Lordes an-  
 nointed is before him. The like conceipt  
 had he of the rest of his brethren: but yet  
 he receiued still a secret information, The  
 Lord hath chosen none of these. But case  
 that Samuell notwithstanding this directi-  
 on giuen him had tooke the horne of oile  
 and annointed some other beside Dauid, for  
 had it not bene great contempt to haue neu-

1 kin, 13  
 33

Psal. 119  
 126

Psal. 10, 12

1 Sam. 16

proceeded contrary to commaunde: So  
in this case, they to whom the office and  
functiō of laying on of hands belongeth  
in Gods Church, when the Lord shall say  
expressely in his word, I haue not chosen  
this man, he is not gifted for this weigh-  
tie businesse: if they for all that shall giue  
the outward allowance of a Minister to  
him, whom in their certaine knowledge  
God hath not graced with gifts sufficient  
for the calling of a Minister, what pu-  
nishment in all likelihood this rashnesse is  
liable vnto, I leaue it to euery mans  
conscience that feareth God to examine.  
And I pray God giue them whom it con-  
cerneth hearts to consider it.

*Nymp.* I ioyne with you in your good  
desire: and yet perhaps men of place may  
pleade a kinde of necessitie, to admit men  
of no better sufficiency, there bēeing not  
that store of learned men and Preachers,  
to furnish euery seuerall congregation.

*Epaph.* What is to be borne withall in  
cases of ineuitable necessity is one thing,  
& what is to be permitted when the good  
means is not wanting is another thing:  
for this our land, first I think there was  
neuer any trial taken, whether the num-

Mat. 20, 6, 7

Cant. 4, 2

Ephes. 4, 8

ber of learned men were proportionable to the tale of severall parishes : Secondly the Universities are like to the market place, in which stand many of good quality, of whom if you demaund VVhy stand ye here ? they wil answer, Because no man hath hired vs. And the severall colledges, be (as it is said of the teeth of the spouse) like a flock of sheep in good order, which go vp from the washing, which euery one bring out twins, and none is barren among them. Thirdly, the scripture telleth vs, that Christ ascended vppe on high to giue gifts vnto men: why then should we thinke his hand so shortned, as that it shoulde be deemed vnpossible to furnish this whole Church with preaching Ministers. Fourthly, if that be true which some say that there are more learned men in England then in all the reformed Churches of Europe besides, then there is no cause to plead any such necessitie. And therfore I account that as a colour rather then any argument.

*Nymph.* I feare me sir, I haue too much interrupted you : I pray you therefore proceed in your proof of this point, that there is a necessitie layed vppon euerye Minister

that shall vndertake the cure of soules, to be able to do more then barely to read the holy scriptures vnto the people.

*Epaph.* The next reason which I haue to strengthen this principle, is ground-  
ed upon this, because I find by the scripture that it is a matter of very great difficul-  
tie to be a good Minister. There are two  
things principally required in a mini-  
ster: the one, that hee bee able to exhort

*Tit. 2, 9*

with wholesome doctrine: the other, that  
he haue skill to improoue them that say a-  
gainst it. Whereto agreeth that saying of

*veritatis pro-  
pugnatur &  
erroris expug-  
nator. Aug. de  
Doctr. Chr. lib.*

Augustine, that He must be a maintainer  
of truth, and a withstander of error

*4. cap. 4.  
1 Cor. 3, 9*

For which cause the spirituall builders in  
Gods building, which is his Church,  
are not vnfitly compared to those who  
builded the temple in Nehemias his time,  
who did the worke with the one hand, and  
with the other held the sworde. It is a

*Nehem. 4, 17*

shame for a minister, if it shall fall out  
with his spirituall work, as Tobias the  
Ammonite sayd in scorne of the reedified  
Cittye and Temple by the Iewes, Al-

*Nehem. 4, 3*

though they builde, yet if a Foxe goe vppe  
he shall euen breake downe their stonye  
wall. So, I say, it shall be a blemish to a

teacher in Gods Church, if he shall builde so weakely that those fores, those little  
 Cantic. 2, 15 fores (of whom the spouse complaineth) shall be able by & by to breake downe the building. Well then, let any man consider either of these two, and tell me whether it be not a matter of very great difficulty in any good measure to perfoyme it. The Prophet Ilay sayth, that the Lord had giuen him a tongue of the learned, for y<sup>e</sup> one peece of seruice, that he might know to minister a word in time to him that is wearie: and yet this is but one bzanch of a Ministers office. If we shall adde to it other particulars, such as are wisdom in admonishing, courage in reprobuing, soundnesse in opening the treasure of the holy text. discretio in applying according to times & persons, with the like, which are required of every Minister in his place: then we cannot but yelde that he had need to be able to do something more  
 1 Tim. 3, 15 then reade, who shall seek to behaue himselfe in the houl of God as he ought to do.  
 Now for that other part, which standeth  
 Tit. 1, 10, 11 in stopping the mowthes of vaine talkers and deceivers of mens minds, which oppose them selues against Gods trueth

it is (as Augustine well sayth) a matter requiring moze painefull and plentiful learning, as shall appeare to him that shall consider either the multitude of false opinions, or the quality of those which do defend them. For the multitude, this is a cleare case, that whereas euerie fourmer age hath brought forth some one or moe, to the disturbance of the peace of Gods Church, and to the exercising of the beste learned that eache time coulde afforde, all these are flowne together into this last age as into a common sewer. So that there is not any error which the fourmer times knewe, and withall condemned to the pitte of hell, but this our age hath raked it vpp againe, and set (as it were) a new glosse vpon it, and made it by addition much moze dangerous. Besides, we haue Popery, which is a fardle of heresies, and the very compound of all the rest. Now for the quality of those which are the patrones thereof, (of Poperie especially) it is well knowne that though they haue amonge them, as it was saide of old, many wooden priests, all whose learning hangeth at their girdle in their Portuis, yet they which in

*Operosioris  
vberiorisque  
doctrina. Aug  
in Euch. ad  
Laur.*

*Lignei Sacer-  
dotes.  
Boniface*



Luke 16, 8

*hic dicitur talia  
in xxi. 2 COR. 2*

16

*Onus est velip-  
sis Ang. form-  
dandum Bern.*

these our times haue put forth the them-  
selues to support the drouping and de-  
caying kingdome of Antichrist, are noe  
punies, but manye of them men of ex-  
cellent wittes, deepe learning, and vn-  
wearied industry: by their writings, and  
bookes, and disputations, makinge good  
the saying of our Sauioꝝ Christe, The  
children of this world are in their genera-  
tion wiser then the children of light. Now  
then to discouer the force of my intended  
reason, I draw it to these heads: first, I  
know that whosoever should undertake  
out of the scripture to describe the office  
of a Pastor, he cannot without a palpa-  
ble betraying of the truth leaue out these  
two things which I haue named, the a-  
bility to teach the obedient childꝛ of the  
Churche, and the skill to oppose himselfe  
against the enemies of the Churche. Se-  
condly, this I knowe also, that hee that  
shall either by discourse examine, or by  
personall experience trye the difficultie of  
well performing these duties, will saye  
with S Paule, Who is sufficient for these  
thinges? and acknowledge with Bernard,  
that the ministry is a burden, which the  
Angels themselues may well tremble at.  
Thirdly,

Thirdly, I am as cleere in this, as in any of the two former, that there is noe such difficultie in the faculty of reading, which as it is the first step to learning, so it is of all other thinges incident to a scholler the most easie. So that, seeing to hold opinion that an onely reading Minister is a sufficient Minister, maketh that callinge of all other the most easie, which in it own nature, as it is described to vs in the scripture, is most laborious, requiring so studious preparation to it, and so great intention & diligence in the performance of it, I must needs settle my selfe vppon this point, and perswade others also to it, that there is moze required in a minister of the new Testament, then to reade the scripture, though I still hold that a parte of his duty, and (as I haue said befoze) a matter very behouesfull for the spirituall benefite of Gods Church.

*Nymph.* I could easily agree to that which you haue said, onely this doubt something stayeth me: if you hold no man a ful Minister, except the same bee able to preach, what shall we think then of the sacraments administred by such; how can they be true sacraments if such be no true Ministers?

*Epaph.*

Calu. Inst. lib

4 c. 15. sect. 16

*Epaph.* For answer to that doubt, first this is a true and a received rule, that a sacrament is not to be esteemed by the hande of him which administred it: neither doeth the dignitie of the deliverer, adde worth to the sacrament, nor the indignitie lessen the true nature of it. Secondly, hee which hath an outward calling by the Church, though happely he be unworthy and unmeet for the place whereto he is called, yet he is to be reputed as more then a private man: and therefore because by the appointment of the Church he standeth in the roome of a right and lawfull minister, if there bee no fault in the substance of the action of administering, the sacramentes are true sacramentes, though the party executing that office be not altogether so allowable. The Scribes and Pharisees, who were the Doctors of the Jewes, many of them were of other Tribes then of the tribe of Levi, and crept in by corruption and bribery into those places, and were of unsound iudgement in many thinges, as maye easily be gathered by the storve of the Gospell; yet our Sauioz willed his Disciples to heare them, because they

sate

late in Moses chaire. Their entrance was naughtie, yet their ministry was to be esteemed, so long as they failed not in the substance thereof. And this (I think) may resolute you for that matter.

*Nymphas.* I will rest satisfied with this answer, til I shall find either by mine own priuate meditation, or by conference with others (better skilled in these points then I) what further to reply. I desire to heare you yet further in this matter, touching the necessitie of preaching in a Minister.

*Epaph.* I am very willing to proceed, onely I woulde haue you to remember what I sayde at my firste entraunce into this matter: namely, that I woulde stande onely vppon proofes of Scripture. S. Augustine sayth, that that was the auncient order of disputing, to haue the booke of holy scripture by, and to stand to the tryall thereof. And therfore it was an excellent & memorabile course of Constantine the Emperoz, who commaunded the Fathers met together in the Councell of Nice, to refer that great controuersie then in hand, touching the Godhead of Christ, to the decision of the Scripture. And it is Gods owne voyce the

*Epist. 263.*

*Theod. li. 1. c. 6*

Isay 8. 20

that we should to the law, and to the testimonie. Wherefore wishing you to looke for no proofes from me, but such as are fetched out of the scripture, I set this downe as my third reason, that whereas the Lorde made verie good p[ro]uision for the maintenance of those who were to minister about holy thinges, I finde not either in the old or new Testament that any were p[ro]vided for by such allowance, but onely such as were able to instruct the people by opening and expoundinge the law. The office of the Levites in the old law, stood vpon two things, one was

Deut. 33, 10.

to put incense before the Lordes face, and the burnt offering vpon his altar : therein they were the peoples mouth vnto God : the other was to teache Iaakob Gods iudgement, and Iliael his law : in that they were Gods mouth vnto the people : for this cause it was the ordinance of God ( according as I noted to you the place in the beginning of this conference ) that the Priests lips should preserue knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth : for (sayth the text) hee is the messenger of the Lord of hoasts : that is, one appointed to be the opener and declarer of the will  
of

Mal. 2, 7

of God among the people. And lest any man should thinke, that the lawe which the people were to seeke at the Priestes mouth, was nothing but the bare letter and witten text of the lawe, wee maye remember first, that the people had the free vse of the law in their priuat houses, so that they had noe such neede to seeke that at the Priestes handes. Secondly, that it was the vse of the Leuites when they did reade in the booke of the lawe, to giue the sense alio, and to cause the people to vnderstand the readinge. And hence it was, that when our Sauioꝝ Chrysostome stood vppon to reade on the Sabbaoth day, (accoꝝding to his office, as some thinke that hee was chosen one of the ordinarie two and twenty Priestes of the Temple) when hee had closed the booke, the eyes of all that were in the Synagoge were fastened on him: because it was the order that presently vppon the readinge of the lawe, folloiwed the exposition of the lawe. Whence also was it that Paul & Barnabas being at Antioch vpon a Sabbaoth daye, After the Lecture of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue seat vnto them, to intreat them, that if they had anye

Deut. 6, 7

Nehem. 8, 8

Luke 4, 16

Suidas in dictione. Theos.

Acts 13, 15

Isay 8. 20

that we should ro the law, and to the testimony. Wherefore wishing you to looke for no p<sup>ro</sup>ses from me, but such as are fetched out of the scripture, I set this downe as my third reason, that whereas the Lorde made verie good p<sup>ro</sup>vision for the maintenance of those who were to minister about holy thinges, I finde not either in the old or new Testament that any were p<sup>ro</sup>vided for by such allowance, but onely such as were able to instruct the people by opening and expoundinge the law. The office of the Levites in the old law, stood vpon two thinges, one was to put incense before the Lordes face, and the burnt offering vpon his altar : therein they were the peoples mouth vnto God : the other was to teache Iaakob Gods iudgement, and Israell his law : in that they were Gods mouth vnto the people : for this cause it was the ordinance of God ( according as I noted to you the place in the beginning of this conference ) that the Priests lips should preserue knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth : for (sayth the text) hee is the messenger of the Lord of hoasts : that is, one appointed to be the opener and declarer of the will  
of

Deut. 33, 10.

Mal. 2, 7



of God among the people. And lest any man should thinke, that the lawe which the people were to seeke at the Priestes mouth, was nothing but the bare letter and written text of the lawe, wee maye remember first, that the people had the free vse of the law in their priuat houses, so that they had noe such neede to seeke that at the Priests handes. Secondly, that it was the vse of the Leuites when they did reade in the booke of the lawe, to giue the sense also, and to cause the people to vnderstand the readinge. And hence it was, that when our Sauioꝝ Chriſte stood vpp to reade on the Sabbaoth day, (according to his office, as some thinke that hee was chosen one of the ordinarie two and twenty Priests of the Temple) when hee had closed the booke, the eyes of all that were in the Synagoge were fastened on him: because it was the order that presently vppon the readinge of the lawe, followed the exposition of the lawe. Whence also was it that Paul & Barnabas being at Antioch vpon a Sabbaoth daye, After the Lecture of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent vnto them, to intreat them, that if they had anye

Deut. 6, 7

Nehem. 8, 8

Luke 4, 16

Suidas in dictione. Inoue.

Acts 13, 15

any word of exhortation. they woulde bee pleased to deliver it. This their request arose vpon the custome of ioyning still the opening and interpreting of the lawe with the publike reading thereof, where-  
 to agerth that saying of Iames that Mo-  
 se, was of old time in euery citie, both read  
 and preached euery Saboth day. Thirdly,  
 this may bee noted also, that whereas  
 the Lord threathned to refuse them, that  
 they should be no priests to him, who had  
 reueled knowledge: by that refusinge of  
 knowledge is to be vnderstood both their  
 ignorance in the doctrine of the lawe, and  
 their negligence to insoyne the people  
 in it: otherwise to thinke that there was  
 nothing reprocued in them more, then an  
 vnabilitie to read the law, were a verie  
 grosse conceit. And thus much to proue  
 that for the times of the olde testament,  
 none had the allowance of Priests, but  
 such as were able to instruct. Now for  
 the times of the Gospell, S. Pauli thus de-  
 clareth the continuance of the equitie of  
 that auncient lawe, that like as of olde,  
 They which did minister about the holyc  
 things, did eate of the thinges of the Tem-  
 ple, and they which did waite at the altar,  
 were

Acts. 15, 21

Hof. 4, 6

only

were partakers of the altar : so also it is ordained by the Lorde, that they which preach the Gospell, should liue of the Gospell : none haue anye right to liue by the Gospell that is, of the exhibition and salary of the Church, but those which preach the Gospell. If you demand of me what it is to preache the Gospell, Paule shall resolute you in another place; namely it is this, to labour in the word and doctrine : which whether it bee not more then to reade the word, I refer it to anye mans iudgement. Chrysostome saythe, that these words require of a Minister, that he doth preach and teach, and make sermons: and the olde rule of the lawe, which Paule applieth to the purpose requireth so much, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the oxe that treadeth out the corne. The oxe that is allowed to eate of the corne, is not he onely which treadeth vpon the corne, but which treadeth it out, that worketh it out of the huskes, that it may be fit for mans vse. So he is to eate of the maintenance of the Church who is able to set the worde of God (the spirituall foode) before the people, not only in the eare (as it were) in the words  
and

1 Cor. 9, 13

1 Tim. 5, 17

vt predicet,  
doceat & con-  
cionetur.

and letter of the scripture, but in the true sense and interpretation of it. It is an excellent saying of S. Hierome, Let vs not thinke (sayth hee) that the Gospell is in the words of the scripture, but in the sense, not in the outward face, but in the marrow thereof: and as Basill speaketh, not in the sound of the ayre, but in the power of the things meant. I woulde haue the (sayth Tertullian) exercise thy selfe to the sense of the matter, and not to the sound of the worde. It is a rule among Lawyers, that not the bare words is the law, but the meaning of the Lawe. And in the Scripture, they are sayde to teach the law, which shew the sentence or substance & matter of the law. So then, he is a Teacher allowed to liue vppon the common charge, which treadeth out (as I may so speake, alluding to the similitude of the ore) the sense of the scripture out of the letter of the scripture: and stayeth not (as Hierome speaketh in the fore-remembred place) in the leaues of wordes but searcheth to the roote of the vnderstanding thereof. You may (if you wil) adde hereto that other place of Paule to this purpose, Let him that is taught in the

*In com 1. cap.  
ad Galat. non  
in verbis sed in  
sensu, non in  
superficie sed  
in Medulla.*

*Basill lib 2. con-  
tra Eunomium*

*Tertul. aduers.  
Prax. ad sensu  
rei non ad so-  
num vocabuli.*

*Sensus Legis  
lex est non nu-  
da verba.*

*Deut. 17, 9, x*

*In sermonum  
Foliis.*

*Ad radicem  
rationis.*

*Gal. 6, 6 ὁ ἀκούων  
τὸν λόγον τοῦ κυρίου  
καὶ μὴ ἐκτείνων.*

the word, make him that hath taught him partaker of all his goods. He that wil haue a share in the temporall goods of the people, must let them receiue spirituall good from him. He who looketh to care of the milke of the flock, (that is as it is expounded by Augustine, of that which is giuen by the people for the sustenance of their ouersers) must in equitie not bee wanting to afforde them that which maye be for the building vppe of their soules in Christ Iesus : otherwise there is no proportion. And were it not that men did more affect pride then painefulnesse, the fat and the wooll of the flocke, then the feeding of the sheep, this doctrine woulde neuer be gainsayd ; we shoulde not then haue that iust cause to lament the state of so many, whom we see scattered abroad as sheepe hauing no shepheard : neither to complaine with Augustine, that there are manye who reioyce in the name of Pastors, but care not to fulfill the office of Pastors. Thus haue you my thirde reason, which though it hath bene stretched out by something a large discourse, yet it may be reduced to this brieft : the worde of God prouiding a maintenance

*August. in lib.  
de Pastoribus.*

*Fastū hominis  
quam pastum  
ouium. Ber. ad  
Euagr.  
Ezech. 34, 3*

*Math. 9, 36  
Sunt qui pasto-  
rum nomine  
gaudent, pasto-  
rum autem of-  
ficiū implere  
nolunt. In lib.  
de Pastoribus.*

1. Tim.  
3. 17

of honoz for the Ministers of his church,  
hath not giuen allowance to any to linc  
by it, but onely to men able to instruct by  
opening the scripture, therefore there is  
moze required in a Minister then to be a-  
ble to read the scripture.

*Nymph.* You haue so well and through-  
ly satisfied me for this matter by these your  
three reasons, that I will not vrge you fur-  
ther: onely I will pray you teach me how to  
answere some exceptions and pretenced  
reasons, some against the necessity of prea-  
ching, some for the sufficiencie of reading.

*Epaph.* I am willing to followe you  
seeing I entred into this matter for your  
sake: and if hereafter any doubt shall a-  
rise in your minde vpon further scanning,  
touching these thinges which haue beene  
saide, I hope God will afforde vs oportu-  
nity further to debate them. If you will  
therefore let me heare what you haue  
hearde pleaded by those which are of a  
different opinion. I doubt not but by the  
grace of Christ you shall finde the trueth  
to be as it is well called, An eternall vic-  
torie: and that (as that worthy Romane  
saide sometime) though it be often too much  
withstoode, yet it can neuer be cleane ex-  
tinguished.

*Veritas aeterna  
victoria. Aug.  
de cin. Dei li. 2  
cap. 29.*

*Fab. max. abud  
Lin. li. 22. sepe  
laborare nimis  
nunquam extin.*



*Nymphas.* It is said by some, that this opinion touching the necessitie of expounding and opening the scripture by preaching, doeth derogate from the dignitie of the scripture, and doeth seeme to fauour the doctrine of Popery, touching the obscuritie and darkenesse of the holy writte, as though there were suche necessitie of a Teacher to come to the vnderstanding of it.

*Epaph.* The answer to this is easie. Touching the Scriptures, God forbidde but we shoulde acknowledge that they are both in their owne nature lighte, and such also, which by the beames thereof doe giue light vnto the eies. And it is true which S. Austine saith, that all matters necessary to faith and manners, are to be founde in those things which are set downe plainely in the Scripture: and therefore, we doe both exhorze to the reading of the Scriptures priuately, and commend the publike rehearsing of them in the congregation. Yet this is no whit contrarie to the opinion touching the necessitie of preaching. And so much shall euerdently appeare, if we marshall our hearers into thre companies. The first

Psa. 119, 105  
Psal. 119, 8  
Paule ascribeth to the word both  
our light, and  
perpetuall enligh-  
tning: 2 cor.  
4, 6.  
Aug. de doct. Chr. lib. 2. ca. 9  
In iis que aper-  
ta posita sunt.



sort are grossely ignorant, and extremely negligent in the matters of God. The second are of some better both care to looke into the scriptures, and capacitie to conceiue them. The thirde are as well able to sound out the truth by the priuate study of the scripture. as those who bee professed Diuines. There is no hearer (I meane amonge our people professinge the present Religion) but hee belongeth to one of these three rankes. Now for the former of these, preaching cannot but bee most necessary: for as in their negligence of themselves they will neuer seeke for knowledge, but it must euen in a kind of violence be put vpon them, so in their ignorance the plaine text read will profit them nothing, vnlesse with it be ioyned the skilfull industrie of some painefull workeman, who by framing himselfe to the shallow capacitie of the silliest, and by adding precept to precept, line to line, here a little and there a little maye drop in some knowledge, and thorough often sharpening of the necessary points of Religion, maye make something to enter. Secondly for the next sorte which according to Christs commaundemēt do searche

2 Tim. 2, 15  
*Ad infantium  
 & lactentium  
 capa citatem  
 Aug. in psal. 8  
 Isay 28, 10  
 Deut. 6, 7. a-  
 cute in reris  
 Trem.*

John 5, 39

the other

the scripture, though I know they shall find their spirituall hunger to be satisfied by many plaine and comfortable places, yet they shall many times bee so plunged & set as it were, that they shall saye with the Eunuch, How can I vnderstande, except I had a guide? It is Gods wisdom, as well to exercise vs with harde places, as to feede vs with those which are perspicuous, both to teach vs to praye with Dauid, that the Lorde woulde open our eyes that wee may see the wonders of his law, and withall to establish the necessity of the publike ministry, and to teach vs humilitie, when we must be faine to depend vpon the instruction of others. As for the third kind, who perhaps are able because of education in good letters, to search out the mystery of y<sup>e</sup> text by their owne priuate industry, as well as the most sufficient Preacher, yet as I doubt not but the same shall euen better their iudgements by the meanest sermon (if that be a fit tearme to bee giuen to a sermon, in which Gods truth is soundly deliuered) so I am sure they shall find hearing to be very behouefull, if it be for no other thing, yet (as a learned father well

L 3

obserueth

*Spiritus sanct.  
fami nostre co  
sulit in locis a-  
pertiorib. Aug  
de doct. Chr.  
lib. 2. cap. 6  
Acts 8. 31*

*Pascit manife-  
stis, exercet oc-  
cultis. August.  
tract. 45. in Io.  
Psal. 119, 18.*

*Chrys. hom. 44.  
in opere imper-  
fecto in Math.  
ut alii essent  
Doct. alii dis-  
cipuli.*

*διὰ τὴν ἐκ-  
μυσίαν ἡμῶν Chry.  
Hom. 3. in 2  
Thes.*

2 Theſ. 3, 13  
2 Pet. 1, 8

Rom. 15, 14.

obſerueth it) ſo: their owne ſluggiſhnes,  
that ſo they may be quickened vp to good  
duties, we being all in nature ſo prone  
though we know much, yet to be wearie  
of well doing, and to be idle and vnfruitful  
in the knowledge of our Lord Ieſus Chriſt.  
It is an excellent ſaying of the Apoſtle  
Paul writing to the Romanes, and well  
fitting this purpoſe: I my ſelfe (ſayth he)  
am perſwaded of you my brethren that ye  
are alſo full of goodnes, and filled with all  
knowledge, and are able to admoniſh one a-  
nother: what greater comendation could  
be: theſe men might ſeem not to need any  
further inſtruction: but marke what ſol-  
loweth, Neuertheleſſe brethren, I haue  
ſomewhat boldly after a ſort written vnto  
you, as one that putteth you in remem-  
brance, through the grace that is giuen me  
of God Though a man haue attained to ſai-  
neuer ſo great perfection in knowledge yet  
yet he ſtandeth ſtil in need of a Preacher  
though it be but to be a remembrance of  
vnto him. Theophilus was wel inſtructed  
in y<sup>e</sup> miſtery of Chriſte, yet Lukes Goſp<sup>el</sup> haue  
was needfull ſo: him, that hee might by the  
knowledge the certaintie of thoſe thinges  
Preaching is not ſuperfluous, though

Luke 14

man were neuer so cunning. This brieue  
 view of the state of our severall hearers,  
 may serue to make this good, that to urge  
 the necessitie of preaching as the meanes  
 to beget faith is noe derogation to that  
 doctrine which wee holde, touchinge the  
 brightnes and plainnes of the Scripture.  
 The Scripture is as a light shininge in a  
 darke place, but neither do all looke into it,  
 neither can all that heare it read. publickly  
 conceiue it, vnlesse they be prepared to it  
 by some former familiar instructiōs, nei-  
 ther do all that peruse the booke of God, so  
 fully vnderstande all, that they neede noe  
 teacher, neither yet can any man though  
 of neuer so good parts, attaine to that ful-  
 nes, as that he shal not (at the least) stand  
 in need of an admonisher. It is a good ob-  
 seruatiō (in my iudgement) of him, who  
 saith that the word is indeed light, but the  
 preaching Minister is as y candlestick, of  
 which Christ speaketh, by which y word  
 of God giue h light vnto all that are in the  
 candlehouse. And indeede this similitude may  
 haue y better approbatiō, if we note how  
 by the candlestick which the Lord Iesus  
 threatneth to remoue out of the church of  
 Ephesus, is meant especially y minis-  
 ter

2 Pet. 1. 19

wolf. in Neh.  
cap. 8.

Matth. 5. 15.

Reuel. 2. 7

John 1, 9  
Luk. 1, 79

Reu. 1, 16, 20

Psa. 119, 105

of þ word. God doth all things by means (ordinarily). Christe is the true light, which giueth light to them that sit in darknes, yet the faithfull Ministers of seuerall congregations are said to be starres in his right hand, by which he giueth light vnto his church. If this be true, I see not what inconuenience can follow vpon it, if wee say, though the word be a lanterne, yet it then giueth best, & clearest, & fullest light when it is lifted vppe as it were, and the brightnes thereof caused to spread forth into euery corner, by the skill and paines of a sufficient Minister.

*Nymph.* Another exception vsed by some, whose endeouour is to equall (if not to preferre) bare reading vnto preaching, is, that there is more certaintie in the worde read, then in that which you preach: that which is read, men are sure is Gods word, but they haue not the like assurance of that which is preached.

*Epaph.* If you desire a short & direct answer to this exception, take it thus; This allegation touching the certaintie of the worde reade aboue the doctrine preached, is not true. There are in our congregations three sorts of people especially: first, ignorant

ignozant persons : secondly, cauillers :  
and lastly, iudiciall and carefull hearers.

The ignozante are as vncertaine touching that which wee call the scripture, whether it bee be the worde of God, as they be touchinge our preaching : they haue no assurance of it, but tradition and report, which is a poore certainty, & they haue as good an opinion of the Apocripha books, as of the other which we call canonical. Besides that, it is buzzed into many of our common peoples eares, by whispering Wapists, & it is thereby become ordinary in many mouthes here in y<sup>e</sup> country, that our Bible is no true Bible and that our translation is iustly to be doubted of. Secondly, those that are possessed with a humoz of cauilling, may as wel demanda how they know the scripture to be scripture, & those things to be true which are writte in it as how they may be resolued that our preaching is the truth. Thirdly, your best hearers which heare as Christ sayth with a good and an honest heart, to Luke 8, 15  
them the certaintye of the truth in the written text and in the sermon is both alike : for as they haue a certaine secret teachinge by the spirit of God (which  
S. Iohn



1 Iohn 2, 10

Roman 3, 2

1 Thel. 4, 9.

*Loquitur and  
cor minusculis  
quo n. sum.  
epist. 3*

*Epist. 62. ad  
Theoph. cap. 2*

S. Iohn calleth by  $\hat{y}$  name of an ointment from him that is holy: whereby they are perswaded of the truth of the Scripture, and doe account it the oracle of God, (in respect whereof they are said to be taught by God: and Austine sayth, God speaketh to our heartes): so also they are enabled by the same spirit to iudge of that doctrine which they heare, by the scripture, and equally to embrace pointes confirmed by it, and those which are expressly and in so many words revealed in it. So the there is no more certaintye of the text then of the doctrine preached out of  $\hat{y}$  text. Those which are ignorant, or dispose to cavill, are doubtfull of both alike: for the one are blockish and know nothing, the other are humorous and will bee satisfied with nothing. Again, those which are Gods children, are alike assured of both: of the text, by the secret perswasion of Gods spirit: of the doctrine, by tryall taken of it by the text. I remember a saying of S. Hierome: I know (sayth hee) that I otherwise esteem of the Apostles, then of other treatisers: the Apostles I know spake alwaies  $\hat{y}$  truth: the other as men in many things were deceived. The speech maye well



well be applied to this purpose: the books of holy Scripture we must yeelde consent unto them without refusall, because it is certaine that they are all given by inspiration of God, so that there is nothing in them of any private motion: but as for the writings and preachings of men, they are not to bee credited before they be tried whether they are of God. Thus much willingly is acknowledged: but yet after this tryall made, and by the dayly searching of the scriptures, those things which in preaching are deliuered are founde to be so; then the doctrines, though drawne out of the text by the art and wit of man, and otherwise amplified, enlarged, and urged by the helps of learning, are not to be called the opinions of a man, but the words of God. It is a good rule of the learned, that those points which are collected out of the scripture, are of like authority with those which are directly writtē in it. When Paul being at Thessalonica wēt into the synagoge of the Iewes, & disputed with them by the scriptures, I hope no man wil say, but that those things which he by argument and discourse drew out of the writtē word, were of equal authority with

*Sine ulla recreatione. Aug. de nat. & gra. cap. 6.*

2 Tim. 3, 16.

2 Pet. 1, 20

1 Iohn 4, 1

Acts 17, 11

1 Pet. 4, 11

*ἀποκ. διδ.*

*Perinde sunt ea quę ex scriptis colliguntur atque ea quę scribuntur.*

*Naz. lib. 5. de Theolog.*

*ὁτι καὶ ἡ ἀποκ.*

Acts 17, 2.

*inf. c. 16*

Acts 26, 22

Acts 20, 27

Acts 17, 11

with pointes expressely mentioned. Paule pleading before Agrippa, stood stiffely to the iustifying of his doctrine, because hee had saide no other things but those which the Prophets & Moses did say shold come. His doctrine was the same with the doctrine of Moses and the Prophets, yet not in words, but in sense and substance. And the same Apostle is not afraid to call his preaching The counsell of God, though it were in regarde of the tenor and course of speech, differing from the expresse letter of the text. If it shall be said unto me, that there is a difference betwixte our sermons and Paules, I willingly confesse it; but yet I say, that eben Pauls sermons were subiect to the like tryall that ours be, as appeareth by the practise of the Noblemen of Beræa. And therefore as his preaching was not to bee esteemed as the worde of God, till tryall, and being tryed was equally to bee reuerenced as the witten worde it selfe: so neither are our Sermons to be by and by credited vppon our bare worde, but to be thoroughly examined: but being once founde to houlde at the touch-stone, then they are so to be reputed Gods woorde, that

that it may be ſafely ſaid, Hee that deſpiſeth them, deſpiſeth not man but god. And indeed unleſſe we ſhall giue equall credite and reſpect to matters ſoundly proued by ſcripture, and to points expreſſed in it, we ſhall hazard the trueth of many, and the ſame no petty principles of Religion, which I knowe are ſubſtantiſhly confirmed by the ſcriptur, but yet are not word for word ſo to be found in the ſacred text, as we maintaine them. And this I think may be a ſufficient anſwere to this objection. αὐτοὶ δὲ ἐν  
ἐκείνῳ. Tell me I pray ydu, howe you doe conceiue it.

*Nymph.* As far as I can coniecture, your anſwer is this: that when that courſe of due triall (which is meete) is taken, touching things taught by preaching, then the ſcripture being found to giue allowance to the: there is as great aſſurance of the authoritie of the one as of the other; and that is as much to be accounted the worde of God, which the ſcripture warranteth, as that which by name in ſo many woordes it expreſſeth.

*Epah.* That is indeede the ſumme of the anſwere: to which (if you will) you may adde this, that by preaching  
men

men come to be better assured of the authoritie of the scripture : for, the better they understand it, the more comfort they find in it, and the more they feele the power and working of it, (all which, by the blessing of GOD are the effectes of preaching) the more are they assured that the scripture is the very thing which it is said to be, even a perfect, pure and sweete doctrine, converting the soule, reioycing the heart, and able to make a man wise vnto saluation. It is truely said, that the Scripture standeth not in reading, but in vnderstanding. What shall it auayle men to carry a kinde of conceipt of some diuine authoritie to be in the Scripture, so long as they are ignorant of the mysterie of it, and without any apprehension or tast of the comfort which is intended in it?

*Nymph.* I am sory that I am constrained to make you tarry so longe in this matter, and that so much the rather, because there are many other things yet behind wherein I am as desirous of your helpe as in these already handled : yet becaule I haue this good oportunitie, and do find you also so willing to instruct me, I will yet further ac-

quaint

Psal. 119, 7, 8  
Psa. 119, 103

2 Timo. 3, 5.  
*Non in legēdo,  
sed in intelli-  
gendo Hieron.  
contra Luc.*

Rom. 15, 4

quaint you with one other allegatiō which being answered, I shall (I thinke) be well prouided, both to satisfie those of my acquaintance which shall perhaps seeke help from mee, and also to saye somethinge to those who with their quirkes and shewes of reasons, thinke to putte downe such plaine men as I am, when wee come into their companie. I named it to you before (though happely by length of communication it is slipped from you) and it is this, That euen reading it selfe is preaching: and that they seeke to prooue by these reasons: firste, they saye, to preache is nothinge but to publish the Gospell, and that is done by readinge: secondlye, in hearing the scriptures read, wee heare the sermons of the Prophets, of Christe, and of his Apostles, which passe all other sermons which any man nowe can make. Thirdly, there is (they saye) euen in reading that which wee so much commende preachinge for, namely expoundinge and applyinge; for the new Testament is the expounder of the olde, and the Epistles of Paulo and Peter and the rest doe applye both vnto mens consciences. Thus, though in our common speeche wee account

count reading to be one thinge, and preaching to be another, yet by these deuises we are many times shrewdly puzled, and know not sodainly what to answer.

*Epap.* These reasons, what shew soeuer they may make at the first view, yet are they neuer able to proue that for which they are alleaged, as shall (God willing) appeare in the seuerall examination of them. First, for that which is saide, that preaching is nothing but a publishing of the Gospell, I yeeld vnto it, if it bee well and rightly vnderstood: and when it is so vnderstood as it ought to be, then it will appeare that the reading of the bare context, cannot properly be termed preaching. I find in the new Testament foure wordes especiallie to bee vsed, when preaching (so farre forth as it is incident to the office of an ordinarie Pastoz in Gods Church) is mentioned.

1 cor. 9, 16

μαρτυροῦμαι

μαρτυροῦμαι.

Luke. 2, 10.

Luk. 5, 60.

μαρτυροῦμαι.

Act. 4, 2.

μαρτυροῦμαι.

μαρτυροῦμαι.

The first signifieth, to deliuer good tidings, because the Gospel is, as it was by the angels to y<sup>e</sup> shepherds tidings of great ioy to all Gods people. The second third wordes signifie, to make manifest, to discouer, to make knowne, to set forth to open view, and so to handle a matter



as the Prophet was commaunded to  
 deale with a vision which God had shew-  
 ed him, namely, to make it plaine vppon Hab. 2, 2  
 Tables, that he which runneth may reade  
 it. This shall appeare to be true to any  
 man that shall take the paines to examin  
 and duely to ponder those places of the  
 new Testament, in which these wordes  
 are vsed in the Greeke, which being ap-  
 plied to the Minister his office, are trans-  
 lated by the worde Preach. And these  
 kinds of wordes, do fitly set forth the duty  
 of a Preacher, which is especially that,  
 which Paul exhorteth the Ephesians to  
 begge of God on his behalfe, to wit, To  
 make knowne the secret of the Gospell,  
 which seeing it must be soughte for as til-  
 ner, and searched for as for treasure is not  
 ordinarily to be looked for in the vpper  
 face as it were, but to be with paines and  
 industrie digged out of the verie bowels  
 and hearte of the Scripture. The fourth  
 word signifieth to publish, and as an he-  
 rald or a cryer, to deliuer a matter in open  
 place, in the hearing of a multitude, that  
 many may take notice of it. For this cause  
 the Prophet Isaiah was willed to Crie a-  
 loude, and to Lift vp his voyce like a trum-  
 pet,

Rom. 9, 17

διαβόλη α. τ. 17

23. καταγγέλλω :

Act. 13.

καταγγέλλω :

1, 26

καταγγέλλω :

δωκεν τοις κ. 26

Eph. 6, 19

γινώσκω το μυσ-

τήριον τῆς βασι-

λίδος.

Prou. 2, 4.

2 Tim. 4, 2

κήρυξον τὸ εὐαγγέ-

Isay 58, 2



count reading to be one thinge, and preaching to be another, yet by these deuises we are many times shrewdly puz'ed, and know not sodainly what to answer.

*Epap.* These reasons, what thew soeuer they may make at the first view, yet are they neuer able to proue that for which they are alleaged, as shall (God willing) appeare in the seuerall examination of them. First, for that which is saide, that preaching is nothing but a publishing of the Gospell, I yeeld vnto it, if it bee well and rightly vnderstood: and when it is so vnderstood as it ought to be, then it will appeare that the reading of the bare context, cannot properly be termed preaching. I find in the new Testament foure wordes especiallie to bee vsed, when preaching (so farre forth as it is incident to the office of an ordinarie Pastor in Gods Church) is mentioned. The first signifieth, to deliuer good tidings, because the Gospell is, as it was by the angels to y<sup>e</sup> shepherds tidings of great ioy to all Gods people. The second third wordes signifie, to make manifest to discouer, to make knowne, to set forth to open view, and so to handle a matter

1 cor. 9, 16. *ὁ δὲ κηρύττει*

*τὸ εὐαγγέλιον*

*ὡς ἐντολή*

Luke. 2, 10.

Luke. 5, 60. *ὁ δὲ*

*ἐκείνους*

Act. 4, 2.

*καταγγέλλει τὴν*

*τιμήν.*

as the Prophet was commaunded to  
 deale with a vision which God had shew-  
 ed him, namely, to make it plaine vppon Hab. 2, 2  
 Tables, that he which runneth may reade  
 it. This shall appeare to be true to any  
 man that shall take the paines to examin  
 and duely to ponder those places of the  
 new Testament, in which these wordes  
 are vsed in the Greeke, which being ap-  
 plied to the Minister his office, are trans-  
 lated by the worde Preach. And these  
 kinds of wordes, do fitly set forth the duty  
 of a Preacher, which is especially that,  
 which Paul exhorteth the Ephesians to  
 begge of God on his behalfe, to wit, To  
 make knowne the secret of the Gospell,  
 which seeing it must be soughte for as til-  
 ner, and searched for as for treasure is not  
 ordinarily to be looked for in the vpper  
 face as it were, but to be with paines and  
 industrie digged out of the verie bowels  
 and hearte of the Scripture. The fourth  
 word signifieth to publish, and as an he-  
 rald or a cryer, to deliuer a matter in open  
 place, in the hearing of a multitude, that  
 many may take notice of it. For this cause  
 the Prophet Isaiah was willed to Crie a-  
 loude, and to Lift vp his voyce like a trum-  
 M pet,

Rom. 9, 17  
 διακρίναι αὐτ. 17  
 23. καταγγίλλειν  
 Act. 13.  
 καταγγίλλειν  
 1, 26  
 καταγγίλλειν ὁ  
 δυνάτωρ τοῦ κόσμου

Ephe. 6, 19  
 γνωρίσαι τὸ μυσ-  
 τήριον τοῦ εὐαγγελ-  
 ίου.

Prou. 2, 4.

2 Tim. 4, 2  
 κήρυξον τὸ εὐαγγέ-  
 λίον

Isay 58, 2

Ier. 7, 2

Pro. 8, 2, 4, 5  
9-4Ilay. 55, 1  
Mat. 11, 28

What preaching is.

per; and Ieremiah was commaunded to stand in the gate of the Lords house, and to crie the word there. And hence also it is, that the wisdom of God, is said to stand in the top of the high places, and to make as it were a publike proclamation: O men! ô ye foolish! who so is simple let him come hither. Ho, euery one that thirsteth: come vnto me al ye that are weary, &c. By this it may appeare what it is to Preach, and in what sense Preaching may bee tolerablye fined to bee a publishing of the Gospel: namely, it is an open and comfortable discouerie by word of mouth, making plaine vnto the people of God, the mysterie of godlinesse, euen the secret of the Gospel. Now, as no man duly considering the nature and vse of the formed words can denye Preaching (by a Minister lawfully called) to be euen such a kind of publishing the Gospel, as we now set downe: so neither can he with any face or colour affirme, the action of reading the Scripture to be answerable to this description. So that though it be granted, that the text of Scripture is the Gospel, and the very word of God; and withall, that reading is after a sort for  
a pub

a publishing thereof, becau's thereby the letter of the Text is recited with a lowde voice, from an eminent and conspicuous place, in the audience of a multitude: yet when we shall enter into a more exact examination of thinges, it will then apppeare, that Readinge simply cannot bee called a publishing of the Gospell, in that sense, as it is required of Ministers and Teachers to bee spreaders abroad and proclaimers of Gods truth: Adde hereto, that that which is the principall thinge looked for of a Preacher in the publishing of the word, the bare Reader in the act of Reading, neither can nor doth performe: and that is, the deuiding the word of truth 2 Tim. 2, 15 aright: and (to apply Christs words in a case not much unlike) a giuing to them of Luke. 12, 42 the household (which is the Church, 1. Tim. 3. 15.) their portion of meat in season. A Minister, is one to whom the dispensation (or Stewardship) is committed in the familie of God: and his office is out of the 1 Cor. 9, 17 store-house of the Scripture, to share out to euery one, that which he shall finde by his caring to know the state of his flocke, Pro. 27, 23 to be best fitting and agreeing to him. As for example: Milke (that is, the first heb. 5. 12, 13

Verf. 14.

1 Cor. 3, 2

2 Tim. 2, 25

1 Cor. 4, 21

Tit. 1, 12, xiii  
verse 9, xi.

1 thef. 5, xiii.

1 Tim. 5, i, ii.

1 Tim. 3, xvi,  
xvii.

principles of the worde of God) to those which are inexpert in the worde of righteousness: Stronge meate (that is, doctrine of greater depth) for them, who are able to beare it: Meekenesse of instructinge for those which are contrarie minded: a rodde and sharpe rebuke of slow bellies, that they may be sound in the faith: Improving (or conuincing) of Gaynelayers, that their mouths may be stopped: admonition for them that are vniuly: comfort for the feeble minded: a discret and respectiue framing of exhortation to severall ages and degrees, to the Elders, as to fathers, to the younger men as to brethren, to the elder women as to mothers, to the younger as to sisters. After this sort, every mans portion must bee allotted out vnto him: and this ordering of that prouision, which the Lord (as a carefull houtholder) hath left for his spirituall familie is committed vnto the Minister. The Scripture I confesse is profitable for these purposes, and able to make the man of God absolute and perfect vnto all the good works of his calling, and it is no wholesome swode, vnles it be deliuered out of that Garner: but yet, vnlesse there be moze perfozmed, the

is done by naked reading, (to wit, a pro-  
pounding to the houshoulde, the whole  
store, as it were in grosse,) it cannot be,  
but whilst euery one is left to be his owne  
caruer, the young ones will be starued,  
and the riotous and misgouerned surfette  
themselues, with greedie and vnbesa-  
ming taking that vnto them, which they  
are neither fitte nor able to receiue. And  
this, I thinke, may serue to shew how li-  
tle reason there is in this first Reason,  
why reading of the Scripture shoulde de-  
serue the honourable name of Preaching:  
when as both our common speech, and  
(which is more) the language of the holy  
Ghost, hath put an apparant difference  
betwixt them.

*διαφορεται &  
σημαίνει.*

*Nymph.* Indeed I acknowledge that to  
be true out of my owne experience: for  
though by priuate Readinge the Scripture  
as also by hearing it read, I haue receiued  
much comfort: (the memorye of thinges  
taught therby being renewed, & the truth  
of them confirmed) yet I haue often bene  
quite set, often beene altogether mistaken,  
and still affraid of my owne iudgement  
euen in plainer places, vntill I haue founde  
the publike exposition giuen by the Mini-



lier to iumpe and accord with my opinion. But what say you to the second reason: namely, that in the Scriptures read, wee heare the worthie sermons of Christ, of the Prophets, and of his Apostles: and therefore reading is Preaching?

*Epaph.* I saye it is a verie weake argument. That the sermons of Christ, the Prophets and Apostles were excellent sermons, and that the summe & abridgement of them is to bee founde in Scripture, no man goeth about to denye: yet this being graunted, will neuer proue a Reader to be a Preacher. For he is not a Preacher, who reciteth publike thinges of another mans inditing, but hee which deliuereth matters (though not inuented) yet in respect of art and industry compiled and framed by himselfe. If it be said, that the sermons of Christ, &c. though they be not of his framing that readeth them, yet being reade maye turne to the profite of the people, I answer, that the question is not, whether they maye be profitable, but whether the readinge of them may be called preaching. God forbid any man shoulde denye the public readinge of them to bee for the behoufe



Gods people, (I hope you haue not forgotten what I told you as my iudgment in this case) but how it may be saide, that he which hath reade them to the people, hath perfozmed that office of a Minister which we call preaching, neither can I conceiue, neither (as I thinke) is anye man able to set downe. Besides, if the word Sermon, shall bee precisely vrged, that which was the sermon of Christe, or Ieremiah, or Paule when they liued, and the same vttered by them, cannot be now being recorded in the Bible, and read out by another, so properly called a Sermon: because in our common speech, a Sermon requireth the tongue and voice of him that framed it. And therefore to saue (as some do) that Christ or some one of y<sup>e</sup> ancient Prophets or Apostles preacheth to vs, when we heare the summe of their sermons read vnto vs, is but a borrow- ed kinde of speeche, vsuall amongst scho- lers. Such as that is, that the bloude of Abal speaketh; and that he being dead yet speaketh; or which is saide of the heauens and firmament, that there is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard: and the like, common in the Scripture.

Heb. 12, 24  
Cap. 11, 4

Psal. 19, 1, 3

Ioh. 21, 25.

Againe, let the nature and estate of those which are called the Sermons of the Prophets, of Christ, and his Apostles be a little considered. First in generall this is to be knowne, that wee haue but the brieue and summe, and as it were the heates of their Sermons related in the Scripture for if al that every one of these spake publikely by way of teachinge had bene written, we might well saye as S. John said, touching the Acts and sayings of our Sauioꝝ Christ, the worlde coulde not containe the bookes: and therefore (if profite be desired) there must necessarily be some course taken, by which the things abridged, by the penmen of the holy Ghost in their writings, maye be enlarged. Secondly, the Sermons of Moses are so interlaced with iudiciall ordinances and ceremoniall rites, appertaining onely to the pollicy of those times, that for the peoples behoufe, it is more then conuenient, that they shoulde enioye the benefite of an able Minister, who maye informe them herin, what things be morall, and what bee temporarie, what is the substance of euery ceremoniall shadow, and what the perpetuall and unchangeable

changeable equitie of euery iudiciall constitution. Thirdly, touching the preachings of the Prophets; though they be full of comfort and abounding with sweet consolation, because the maine scope and drift of them all, is to foreshew the renewing and restoring of the Church by Christ, and though they do also notably make knowne the iust iudgement of God against sinne; yet they are so intermixed with mysticall prophecies, with hidden parables, with historicall narrations, and descriptions of Countries, with borrowed speeches, and proprieties of that holy language in which they were deliuered, that, howsoever sometimes a lambe (as the prouerbe is) may finde a word easily to be waded through, yet vnlesse there bee added the helpe and guidance of some learned Ezra, some messenger, or Interpreter, as Elihu saith, calleth him, and the same no ordinary man, but (as the text speakech) one of a thousande, the people cannot possibly reape that good which God intendeth in the revealing of those things. Fourthly, for the Sermons of our Saviour, as wee haue but the verie shorthe summe of many

Neh. 8

Iob. 33, 23

Mat. 4, 17

Luk. 4, 11

many of them (accordinge as I saide before) so for those which are reported more largely by the Euangelists, I perswade my selfe there is no man, but (if hee will speake the truth, out of his owne conscience) hee will confesse, that hee learneth more by them when by preachinge they are explained, then when they are onely read vnto him. Fiftly, wee haue in the Bible verie fewe copies of the Apostles sermons: those that bee, are in the booke of the Aas, and yet many times, this is all which is said of them: they preached

AAs 4, 2

AAs 8.4.5.12

in Iesus the resurrection from the deade, they went to and fro preachinge the word, preached Christ, preached the things that concerne the kingdom of God and many

1 king. 18, 44

the like speeches: all which are like vnto the little cloud, which the seruant of Elias saw; which though at the first it was but like a mans hand, yet at last it couered the face of heauen: so these being clauses of very few words, yet minister iust matter of many large discourses, & the same also very needfull for the well understanding of them. If it shall be saide that the Apostles writings were sermons, I answer, they cannot properly be called their sermons.

mons. Paule writing to the Romanes, sayth, that besides this labour of writing, hee was readie also to preache the Rom. 1, 15 Gospell vnto them: so that he did not account his writinge to bee preachinge.

The Epistles of the Apostles were the summes of that doctrine which they had taught by word of mouth, and according to the tenour whereof, their desire was, that the Ministers of the places to whom they wrote should procede. I know they were reade in the Churches, according as it was made, that a matter written to a whole congregation shoulde be communi-

Col. 4, 16

cated to all in publike: but what then? I doubt not, but the pastors in the severall assemblies, did (as we now doe) preach vppon those Epistles, and open and apply them to their auditories: & so much may easily appeare, as by other places, so especially by that speech to the Hebrewes, by the authour of the Epistle written to them: I beseech you also brethren, suffer the words of exhortation: for I haue written vnto you in fewe wordes: which speech

Heb. 13, 22

(as it is well obserued by two learned interpreters of our later times) the Apostle purposely vsed, least his writing shoulde

Caluin and Iunius.

be

be an occasion to anye, of lessening that due estimation, which the ordinarie course of preaching did deserue. It is all one as if the Apostle had saide: Brethren, notwithstanding al this which I haue written vnto you, yet I pray you continue your accustomed reuerence to the labours of your owne ministers: I, as the nature of an Epistle requireth, haue written briefely, therefore you shall still need the assistance of your watchfull and learned Ouerseers, who shall enlarge these pointes, which I haue drawne as it were into a narrow roome, and by powerfull exhortations applye them eyther to your comforte or reproofe, as their knowledge in your estate from time to time shall direct them. This is the meaninge of that place, plainly prouing y<sup>e</sup> necessitie of ioyning the paines of a preaching Minister, with the writings & Epistles of the Apostles of Christ Iesus. And thus haue you my answer to this second stoute reason, whye Reading shold be preaching, because forsooth, thereby is communicated to vs the summe and substance of the worthye sermons which Christ and the Prophetes and Apostles haue formerly deliuered. The weaknesse  
of



of which reason, I hope this short discourse hath made you to perceiue.

*Nymph.* For these two alleged reasons, you haue indifferently satisfied mee. I doe now expect, what you wil say, touching the last reason why reading should be preaching.

*Epaph.* The third reason (as I remember) was, that reading may therefore truly be called preaching, because in our church the reading of the scripture is so ordered, that first, there is a portion of the old Testament read, next of the new, & thirdly some parcel of the Epistles, which they will haue to be called preaching, because as the new Testament is an exposition of the old, so the Epistles are the supplying of both vnto Gods people. This I think, is the third reason that you told me of.

*Nymph.* You haue hit it right, if you can answer it as fully, as you haue retracted it truly, then it shall neuer be any occasion of scruple to me hereafter.

*Epaph.* To make a short answer to a slight reason, this is that I say: It is true, if we compare the whole new Testament, with the whole old Testament, that the latter is an exposition of the former because it maketh knowne vnto vs, that all the ancient



2 Cor. 1, 20  
 Heb. 13, 8  
*vetus testamē-*  
*tum in nouo*  
*reuelatum, no-*  
*uum in vetere*  
*revelatum. Aug.*  
 in Psal. 105

cient promises, touching the Messias, are yea and Amen in Christ Jesus: so that the substance both of old and new is this, Iesus Christ yesterday, and to day, the same also is for euer. And hereupon is that saying of Augustine: The old Testament (sayth he) is reuealed in the newe, and the new was as it were lapped and folded vppen in the old: the same may also be acknowledged touching the Epistles, that in the doctrine both of the old & new Testament is applyed & pressed vpon mens consciences by wholesome exhortations. But what then? though this hold in generall that the new Testament is the Commentarie to the olde, and the Epistles, the applyers of both, yet it will scarcely be found to holde in particulars: namely, y such a parcell of y new testamēt which cometh in order to be read, is an exposition of the speciall doctrine, and matter of that portion of the old Testament, which was read before it, or that that part of the Epistles, which followeth both, is a direct and expresse brygger of both. So that howsoeuer when we diuide y Scriptures into these three parts, y old Testament, the history of the Gospell, & the Epistles, it be true,

true. & this is the cōmon nature & state of them, that the second parte giueth lighte vnto the first & the latter raiseth exhortations out of both, yet when we come to single out these partes into seuerall positions, we shall not finde that p̄cise and exacte correspondence, as that the exposition of the same points, shall be saide to follow one the other. And this is all which I will oppose to this third reason: which though perhaps it may make a shew among those that are of lesse iudgement, yet it can deceiue no man, that hath any ordinarie skill in the state of an argument.

*Nymph.* This point hath held vs longer then I either wished or imagined: but I was willing, seeing God had giuen this opportunity, to mention as much as I could remember, of things which I haue hearde spoken touching these points: neither is there now any thing behind, (that I can call to mind) which I may further propounde vnto you, concerning this matter.

*Epaph.* It is no marvell though the examination of this one point, hath spent vs so much time: for this is certaine, that euery short obiection, will require a large confutation. Now for the matter it selfe,  
there

Athenzus.

there may perhaps be some other objections, differing from these in shew, but yet they will all in the end be found to be the same. I remember I haue read of a vain-glorious boaster, whose hauing but one onely seruant, yet because hee would bee thought to keepe a great retinue, would call that one seruant by many seuerall names, that men might imagine he had sundrie seruants: So, men may set new names, and new formes vpon these allegations which we haue examined, that so they might affright vs with the name of multitude, but when they are looked into, they will proue the same things, varying in colour and pretence, but agreeing in substance.

Exceptions  
against the  
manner of  
preaching.

*Nymp.* That I may then reape benefit by your aduice in respect of that which followeth, I said (if you remember) that the exceptions in which I desired to bee resolved, were some against Preaching it selfe, some against the maner of it: the exceptions against preaching it selfe, I haue (as of memory wold serue) acquainted you with: there are three things in the manner of your preaching that are much disliked and discommended: the first is, Rudenesse: the second

second is roughnesse: the thirde is ouermuch commonnesse. Touching the first, it is saide, that you preach vnlearnedly without eloquence, without allegation of Fathers and of other authours, and therefore you are accounted but as a companie of English Doctors, which preach vppon the sodaine what commeth into your heades, without studie, which causeth your doctrine to be the lesse regarded.

*Epiaph.* Verily for mine owne parte I doe much mislike rashnesse in preaching, without due preparation, and rudenesse in handlinge the worde of life, as any man. I know he is cursed that doeth the worke of the Lorde negligentlye. Iere. 48, 10  
And as it is meete for euery man when hee entreth into the house of God, to take heede to his sope; so it is much more requisite for him that must enter as it were into the seate of the Lorde, and speake vnto y people in Christes stead, to be very well aduised before he take the couenant of God in his mouth. 2 Cor. 5, 20  
And indeede, the bolde hardinesse of manie now adayes, is greatly to be pittied, who so ordinarily hande ouer heade (as we say) step vp into the pulpit, and when they are there,

1 Cor. 9, 26

Prou. 26, 18

Αἰετοὶ λαλοῦσι,  
καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν αὐτοῖς  
λογισμός.

ὁ πᾶσι διδάσκει.

2 Tim. 4, 2

2 Tim. 2, 15

do little better then beat the aire, & behaue  
themselues many times like the madde  
man of whom Salomon, speaketh, who  
casteth firebrands, and arrowes, and mo  
rall thinges: and so (as the prouerbe is)  
though they speake much, yet say little, by  
that meanes exposing the neuer-enough  
reuerenced exercise of preaching, vnto  
the reproches and scoffes of euil speakers.  
Besides, for learninge, I confesse that  
is necessarily required in preaching. As  
Paul sayth, preaching must be discharged  
in all learning. All liberall artes and sci  
ences are handmaids to Diuinitie, and  
doe owe a kinde of seruice vnto Gods  
Churche. It is saide, a Minister must be  
a worke-man, rightly deuinding the word  
of cruth: now if he want his knife, that  
is, his arte and cunninge, well hee may  
teare and rend it, and violently dismem  
ber it, but that he shoulde rightly diuine  
it, that is vnpossible. Yet withall, that  
I adde, that if to preache after a popular  
and familiar fashion, with desire to speak  
to the conceit & the capacitie of y simple  
and to stand most vpon allegation of  
holy text, very seldome & very sparingly  
mentioning other testimonies, eyther in  
prose

profane or diuine writers : if I haue to  
 preach on this wise be to be termed rude  
 and vblearned preaching, truly for mine  
 owne particular, I had rather acknow- *Malle agnosce  
 re culpā quam  
 deprecari. Pic.  
 Mirand.*  
 ledge that fault, then seeke to put it from  
 mee.

*Nymph.* What is then your opinion tou-  
 ching humane learning, and the writings  
 of the auncient Fathers of the Church, are  
 they not very behouefull, for you that are  
 students and professors of Diuinitie ?

*Epip.* For the study of humane learning,  
 I wold not haue you conceiue otherwise  
 of me, but that I hold it very expedient  
 for him that intendeth the profession of  
 Diuinitie: I am of his mind which wold  
 haue a scholler like the witty Bee, which *Api agumento  
 se similis Hiera*  
 gathereth hony out of euery flower : and  
 I willingly yeld to S. Augustines conceit, *De doct. chr.  
 l. 2. cap. 14*  
 who cōpareth the knowledge of humane  
 sciences & profane authors, to y<sup>e</sup> spoilinge  
 of y<sup>e</sup> Egyptians by y<sup>e</sup> Israelites. Howbeit  
 I wold also stil giue my allowāce to these  
 studyes with this cautiō, namely if they *Si præparent  
 ingeniam non  
 detineāt. Senec*  
 be vbled to prepare the wit & not to detain  
 of it, & keepe it too long from grauer studies :  
 as seeing as the saying is, Learninge is *Ars longa, vi-  
 tabreuitas.*  
 hering & our life but short, it must needes be



*Ego illos vene-  
ror & tantis  
nominib. sem-  
assurgo. Sen. l. 8  
ep. 65*

*August. was  
called hereti-  
corum malleus,  
and Ambrose  
Orbis terrarum  
oculus.*

a preposterous course, to spend the moste  
and best time in those thinges which are  
but as it were circumstances to the prin-  
cipall science. Againe, for the Fathers,  
this I say in fewe wordes, I reuerence  
them, and doe a kinde of homage to their  
very names, and I am contented to ac-  
knoweledge that of them all which was  
saide of two of them, to wit, that they are  
euen the hammeres of heretikes, and the  
eyes of the worlde. Our later heretikes  
as the Antitrinitarians, the Anabap-  
tists, the Quencfeldians, the Libertines  
the Baptistes, haue reuiued the auncient  
heresses of elder times, against which  
those holy men euen spent themselves  
and it is to be reputed as a great blessing  
of God, and an argument of his especial  
care and prouidence for his Church, that  
their writings are preserved to this day  
by which we are the better fitted to grapple  
with the enemies of Gods truth.  
And yet in the study of the Fathers, there  
is diuers times a double error committed  
the one is, that men beginne the studie of  
Diuinitie with the reading of their  
workes: which course for the moste part  
breedeth both confusion for wante of in-  
thode



thode, and errorr also thorough the lacke  
 of knoweledge in the rule and proportion  
 of faith, by whith to trie all thinges, that so 1 Thes. 5, 20.  
 onely that which is good may bee kepte :  
 the other errorr is , that many are ouer-  
 much deuoted to the, being ready almoste  
 to sweare to any thinge which is affir- *Iurare in ver-*  
 med by them : whereas indeede they both *ba.*  
 might and did erre in many thinges, of-  
 ten altering their iudgementes, retrac- *Witnes Au-*  
 ting and repealing manie thinges, see- *stin's retracta-*  
 ing more in their grauer yeares, then at *tions.*  
 the first they did perceiue. Hierome con- *Rhetorici su-*  
 fesseth that he was in one minde in some *mus & in more*  
 thinges when he was a youth, and of an- *declamatorium*  
 other when he grewe more in yeares. He *paulisper lusi-*  
 acknowledgeth also that in some thinges *mus. Contra*  
 he played the Rhetozician, and did dis- *Heluid.*  
 course something idelley after the manner  
 of declaimers. Augustine in many thinges  
 was led more by affection then by iudge-  
 mente, speaking sometimes that whereof  
 hee was not fully resolved, as touching  
 purgatorie, and prayer for the dead, out  
 of the abundant loue to his mother Mo-  
 nica : sometimes forbearing to vtter that  
 which he thought, through lothnes to in-  
 cur the offence of some, yea & frankly he

*In Enc. ad laury**Ad Iannarium*

*In ipſis ſanctis  
ſcript. multo ne  
ſciam plura  
quã ſciam. Ep.  
119.  
Picus Miran.  
ex Euſeb.*

*Nolo authori-  
tat. mĩa ſequa-  
ri, vt ideo pu-  
ces tibi ali-  
quid neceſſe ef-  
ſe credere, quo-  
niam a me di-  
citur. Ad Pau-  
linum.*

acknowledgeth, & his ignorance in ſcrip-  
ture was greater then his knowledge.  
And Origen was ſo iealous of his owne  
iudgement, & he would neuer aduenture  
to write any thing till he was lx. yeres  
old; neither would he ſuffer thoſe things  
which he had taught publiſhly, to be take  
by notaries, whoſe intent was to make  
them comon to the world. And therefore  
though it be very profitable & expedient  
for a Diuine to be well ſtudied in the Fa-  
thers, yet it is good to reade their workes  
as the workes of mē. It was a good aduice  
which Auguſtin gaue to a friend of his; I  
would not (ſaith he) haue thee follow my  
authority, as though you ſhoulde thinke  
your ſelfe bound to beleue whatſoever I  
ſay, becauſe I ſay it. It is wiſedome to  
hold that rule in the peruſing of them all.  
But I forget my ſelfe, to enter into this  
diſcourſe to you, whom it doth not ſo pro-  
perly concerne. Howſoever, by this that  
I haue now ſaide, you may vnderſtand  
my opinion touching both the Fathers &  
other (as you call it) prophane learning.

*Nym.* But I pray you ſir, why may not the  
teſtimonies and writings of men be as law-  
fully vſed in the actiō of preaching, as in the  
priuate preparation for it?

*Epaphroditus*

*Epp.* It is no good consequence, to say that they may be alleadged in the pulpit, because they may be perused in the study. When as Salomon made preparatiō for the building of y<sup>e</sup> temple, he had 80000. 1 King 5, 15 Masons in the mountaines, and among so many, there could not chuse but be much hewing & knocking, and hammering, yet there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any 1 King. 6. 7 toole of irō heard in the house while it was in building. After the same maner it is in Gods spiritual building: those things may 1 Cor. 3, 9 lawfully be vsed in the making p<sup>ro</sup>uision for it, which are not of the like necessitye or lawfulness in the actuall performance of it. But to speake more directly, (because these similitudes serue more to giue light then strength to a matter) if you be desirous to know a reason why wee ought to be very sparing in the vse of mens testimonies in our ordinary sermons, this is 1 Corin. 2, 5. (as I think) y<sup>e</sup> p<sup>ri</sup>ncipal, namely, that our faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God: that is to say, y<sup>e</sup> our iudgmēt in matters of religiō might be grounded not vpon y<sup>e</sup> opinions & verdicts of mē, but vpon y<sup>e</sup> certain & vndouted truth of God: what it is to y<sup>e</sup> cōsciēce of y<sup>e</sup> hearer

¶ 4

that

*Si quid dicatur  
absque scri-  
ptura auditorū  
cognitio clau-  
dicat. in Ps. 86*

*Non valet, hæc  
ego dico, hæc in-  
dicis, hæc ille  
dicit, sed hæc  
dicit Dominus  
ad vincen.*

¶ this is such a mans opinion, or saying of such a Doctor, it being so wel knowne that they might erre: Surely the conscience can neuer finde sure footing vntill it cometh to y<sup>e</sup> scripture. It is a good speache of Chrysostome, If any thing (sayth he) be spoken without scripture, the knowledge of the hearers halteth: his meaninge is, that the iudgement is neuer firme till scripture hath resolved it. It is of no force (saith Augustine) to tell the people, This I saye, and this such a one saythe: onely this, thus saith the Lorde, that striketh the stroke, and doth either conuince or confirme the hearers conscience, it maketh him either to agree to it, or not to be able to say against it.

*Nym.* Do you then think that it is not at all lawfull for a Preacher in a sermon to alleage the Fathers, or to insert the sayings of heathen Poets, Orators, Philosophers, and such like?

*Epaph.* I do not say that it is absolutely vnlawfull to alleage a sentence out of an auncient writer, or out of a Heathen author: for besides, that manye graue godlye, and well learned men doe sometimes so; there maye be as I thinke some

(at least) tolerable causes to alleage the. As for example: the Papists ordinarilye giue out ( & it is common in the mouthes of our subuerted Proselytes ) that the auncient Fathers of the Church are all on their side. For this cause, sometimes in some speciall pointes of difference betwixt them and vs, I take it not to bee disallowable, if the Preacher for the taking away of that scruple out of y<sup>e</sup> minds of me, do shew y<sup>e</sup> consent of the elder writers, that men maye see it is but a vaine brag which our aduersaries make when they say that their religion is sutable to the iudgement of the auncient Church: yet withall, I woulde not haue a man make this ordinary. And besides, I hold it fit for him to admonish the people that it is done, not to derogate from the sufficiencie of the Scripture, neither to tye them to the opinions of men, but onelye to remoue that doubt which by the whispering of wandring Papists may arise in the mindes of those that are not so well settled in Religion. So likewise, for the speeches and sentences of prophane autho<sup>r</sup>s, to bar them vtterly out of Sermons, I dare not, because I finde them  
used

AAs 17, 28

1 Cor. 25, 33

Titus 1, 12

*Prudenter &  
sobrie. Zanch.**Propriis pennis  
configimur.**Theo. trip. hist.  
li. 6. cap. 17*

Deut. 32, 21

used by that worthy Paule three severall times : yet this I say, & as Pauls example warranteth, so it limiteth the use of such testimonies, and sheweth that it must be done wisely and soberly, & that upon two occasions chiefly : the one is to convince Atheists and irreligious persons, which esteeme not the scripture, that they may be driven to saye, We are pierced with our owne quils, & by that meanes may be either converted or silenced. Another occasion is, by some other actions or speeches of theirs to shame those that professe themselves Christians. I remember how God threatneth to prouoke the people of Israel with a foolish nation? according as manye times the Prophets to reforme the backwardnesse and slacknesse of the Jewes, preach to them of the forwardnes and zeale that shal be in the Gentiles after their conuersion. The same kinde of reasoninge noe doubt a Preacher maye sometimes profitably use, by the morally good precepts and actions of the Heathen to checke the carelesnes of men professing Christianity. Thus, now & then I hold a man may tolerably alleage a sentence of a profane writer, and a speech of a heathen



heathen autho<sup>r</sup>. As for the strange manner of preaching which is in vse in many places, both in the vniuersities and elsewhere, there is no man well affected, but if hee knoweth it, he doeth exceedingly pittie it. One, as though the pulpit were but as a scaffold, in which he like a maister of Defence were to play his prizes, and to giue testimony of his witte, playeth vpon euery word, and descanteth vpon euery letter in his text, and as thogh the scripture were but a rattle for children and fooles to make sport withall, he tosseth it hither and thither, & will not faile to offer it any violence, to frame it to an imagined conceit, & to draw it to an idle purpose. Another, as if his purpose were onely to amaze the vulgar, & to affright & astonishe the multitude, mounteth aloft, & is all in his great wordes, & new coined phrases, more fit for some Mimick or Tragedian, then a Minister of the Gospel. A thirde, to gaine the opinion of a profound man, that looketh into matters of more depth then the common sort, rubbeth over the vnauoiz writings of some moath-eaten fryer, and by an vncoth fashion of teaching, togither with a multitude of allegories & intricate

*Tanquã archi-  
ta Crepitacul.*

*Sanguis iuris-  
tus.  
Proicit ampul-  
lus & sesquipe-  
dalia verba.*



Iohn 12,43

Distinctions, maketh both himselfe and all those whose unhappy chaunce it is to be his hearers. A fourth, to be reputed a good linguist and a man of great reading, stuffeth his sermon with a legion of allegations, and enterlaceth it with manie shreddings of Latine and Greeke, and by that meanes, though his doctrine perhaps may be profitable, yet hee confoundeth the memozy of the diligent and attentive hearer. Thus while men being sicke of the Pharisaicall disease, Loue the praise of men more then the praise of God, and prefer the ostentation of their owne supposed learning befoze the edification of Gods Church, the people is brought either into such an amazednesse, as they thinke that anye thinge may be made of the scripture, or to such an vnsetlednesse in iudgement, as that they do rather hunt after variety of teachers fo: their strange maner of preaching, then seeke fo: sound instruction fo: their obbne better edifying. Thus haue you my iudgement touching the vse of humaine testimonies in the exercise of preaching.

*Nymphas:* I willingly agree vnto you in that which you haue said touching some mens

mens course of preaching : I haue sometimes my selfe bene at some mens sermons which haue had the name of great Clarkes and learned men, and yet (it may be mine owne dulnesse was the cause) such hath bin their maner of handling, so full of school-points and termes, and sayings of men, that neither hath my iudgement bene bettred, nor my conscience anye whit comforted thereby. But I do not yet see how you will make the partes of your owne speeche to agree : you say preaching must be learned and eloquent, and yet you are strait in allowing the vse of those things which maye testifie learning, and garnish and set forth your sermons : for I tel you, in the countrey here you are not thought learned, nor yet eloquent, so longe as you speake nought but English, and withall common and ordinarie wordes, and alleage nothinge but places of scripture, which euerye man can serch out of the Bible as well as you. I pray you therfore recõcile these two, how there shall bee that plainnesse in your sermons, and yet learning too.

*Ep.* The matter is not what men think, but what men ought to thinke. It is possible for a man to be skilfull in ʒ tongues, and how a sermō may be plain & yet learned and

Matthew 28, 19

Marth. 28, 19

and yet to be farre from a learned man :  
and much reading, though it argueth in-  
dustrie, & may be a witnesse of a good me-  
mozie, yet it is no certaine argument of  
sound iudgment. What man is most lear-  
ned, who by his skill can make another  
man learned : for this is the end of prea-  
ching, to make men schollers : and he is  
most eloquente, that can make him who  
heareth him vnderstand y<sup>e</sup> which he him-  
selfe conceiueth. The intent of learning,  
is not y<sup>e</sup> men that haue it shoulde thereby  
breed astonishmēt in their hearers, & gain  
admiration to themselves, but that by it  
they shold be profitable & helpfull to those  
which are without it. So likewise, the  
vse of eloquence is not to be as it were a  
mist before a mans speeches, to cause him  
to be the more hardly vnderstode, but to  
giue lustre (as I may so speake) thereto,  
& to bring both light and delight to y<sup>e</sup> dul-  
apprehensio of the hearers. And therfore  
whosoever so preacheth, as that because  
the depth of his learning (as men call it)  
he passeth the capacitie of the meanest  
hearer : again, whosoever so speaketh, as  
that his eloquence (as men terme it) ma-  
keth him to be as it were an alient to his

ordinary audience, surely the same is neither truly learned, nor truly eloquent, because his learning not conceived profiteth not, and his eloquence not understood benefits not. So that this being considered, that he is most learned whose preaching is most profitable, and he most eloquent, whose manner of speaking best entrencheth into every ordinary conceit: it is an easie matter to reconcile these twoe, that our preaching must bee learned, yet familiar: eloquent, and yet so plaine, that it may be truly said of it, that if it be hid, 2 Cor. 4, 3<sup>r</sup> it is hid to them that are lost.

*Nym.* Yet it will be thought that preaching wil grow into very great contempt, and seeme but base in the eyes of wise men, if choise speaking & quaint wordes, which in other discourses are thought very commendable, shall be banished from your sermons.

*Ep.* Why man, did you neuer hear of this phrase, the foolishnes of preaching? When the Gospel was first preached in this world, the reason why it had so colde intertainement was this: The Iewes they wold either haue it confirmed by some extraordinary signes, or els they wold not credit it: 1 Cor. 1, 22

(The Iews require a signe:) **The Gentiles** being men of great learning, as appeareth, they seeing Paul and the rest coming after a very meane fashion, men for their personage silly, for their profession, making shew to know nothing but one Christ, & the same crucified, and for their course and carriage in the ministry, plaine, auoyding purposely the enticing words of mans wisdom, they by & by scorned it, and deemed it folly to be carried away by a thing of that simplicitie: (The Grecians seeke after wisdom): hereupon this Epithete was cast by the reprochfull world vpon the best kind of preaching, to call it foolishnes, and al for this one cause, because as for the substance of it, it is crossing to mans reason, so for the fashion of it, according to the world, it is cleane out of fashion, onely beautifull in this, because it is not beautified with that, without which the nice and giddy worlde thinketh every thing to be deformed. So that the opinion of men reputing it to be but foolishnesse because it wanteth that garish garnishing which mens itching eares are much delighted with, ought to be no disparagement to it in the sight of

of those that are truly religious : and I pray God giue vs all grace that are called to the Ministerie, to be so sette for the Non ornamenta glorie of God in the conuersion of soules, sed documenta Aug. de doctr. Chrſt. l. 4. c. 19 magna est artis celere artem. Phalleratū orationem in theologicis tractatū onibus: de reb. sacris tractatū pedestris oratio necessaria est, non quæ verb. compositione frondescat. ad Damasum. Atramentales Theolog. Eckius

that we may more affecte soundnesse of teaching, then finenesse of speech, and may thinke it our best arte to secrete arte, and to take heede of that bastard eloquence, in this worst age of the worlde, seeketh to make legitimate. It is a good aduice of Ierome, to auoid a pompous kind of speaking in theologicall discourses : for a man (saith he) that handleth holy matters, a low and (as it were) a soote oration is necessarye, and not such as is thickned with artificiall framing of wordes. It is no matter, though the Papistes continue to call vs in scorn Inke Diuines, because of our close adhering to the holy text, so long as the soules of Gods seruants shall receiue comforte by vs : for then I am right sure, this being sought for, the little flock shall pray for vs, and the great shepheard shall be good to vs.

*Nymp.* You haue (at least to my vnderstanding) well remooued this imputation of rude vlearnednesse. I pray you therefore come to the next, which is that your maner



of preaching is too austere: you haue nothing in your mouthes but hell and condemnation, and the iudgements of God, which (as some say) is the nexte way to bring men vnto despaire.

- Epaph.* I confesse indeed, that there is a greate error committed by some, whose zeale doeth sometimes so farre ouer carrie them, that they forget the Apostles rule, of suffering the euill men patiently: and it may not unfitly be saide to many such, as Christ saide to his disciples, when they woulde needs haue hadde leaue to commaund fire to come downe from heauen, to consume them that woulde not receiue him; they know not of what spirit they are. Yet notwithstanding, the concept of the most, who would haue nothing but peace preached to them, when as it may be truly saide to them as Iehu saide to the seruant of Jehozani, what haue they to doe with peace? is not at any hande to be giuen way vnto. It is meet for a Preacher to take heed, that hee breake not the bruised reede, or quench the smoaking flaxe: so it is meete also to beware, howe hee reuerberate the childrens breaste and caste into whelpes. The course warranted to vs by the

2 Tim. 1, 24

Luk. 9, 54, 55

Isay 42, 3

Math. 15, 26



the Scripture is this : first, to indeuour  
the softening of our hearers heartes by  
bringing them to the sighte and sense of  
their owne wretchednesse, before wee ad-  
uenture to apply the riches of Gods mer-  
cie in Christ Iesus. The preaching of the  
Gospel is compared by our Sauour him-  
selfe vnto the sowing of seede : as there-  
fore the ground is first to be broken vp with the  
plough, before the seede be committed to  
it : so the fallowe ground of our heartes  
must first be broken vp with the sharpnes  
of the law, and the very terror of the Lord,  
before we can be fitte to entertaine the  
swete seede of the Gospel. They who de-  
fire as liuely stones to be made a spirituall  
house euen the habitation of God by the  
spirit, must yeld themselues to be squared  
and hewne, and smothered by the well ap-  
plying of the lawe : that so they may be-  
come fitte to be coupled together with the  
rest of the building, and to growe vnto an  
holy temple in the Lorde. We must haue  
our mowthes stopped by the lawe, and in  
our owne feeling. stande culpable before  
God, and euen as it were concluded vnder  
sinne, before we can bee admitted to  
thinke our selues to haue any, the leaste

Math. 13

Ier. 4, 4

2 Cor. 3, xi.

1 Pet. 2, 5.

Ephes 2, 22.

Verse 21

Rom. 3, 19

Gal. 3, 22

Luke 2, 10

Mat. 7, 6

Prou. 27, 7

Eph. 3, 18

Acts 7, 51

Prou. 26, 1, 3

Psal. 22, 7

Prou. 1, 22

Prou. 14, 9

Matth. 5, 6

Ier. 50, 4

Irou. 5, 25

interest in the glad tidings of the Gospell. To preach mercie and grace vnto them, which feele no neede of mercie, and know not the worth of grace, is no better then to cast pearles before swine, and to expose the louing kindenesse of God vnto contempt. The person that is full, despiseth an honie combe, saith Salomon: and what doth a proud Pharisee, or a churlish Nabal, or a scoffing Ismael, or a politique Gallio, care to heare of the breadth and length, & depth, and height of the loue of God in his son Iesus? The doctrine of that nature, is as unfitting such vncircumcised eares, as the snow the sommer, and the rain the haruest. Vnto the horse belongeth a whip, to the asse a bridle, & a rod to the fools back. So long as men will be like an horse, and a Mule which vnderstandeth not, and manifest their folly by hating knowledge, and by making a mocke of sinne, what other thing should they haue, but that which of right belongeth to them? Let the soule be once humbled, and brought to hunger and thirst after righteousness, & then a worde in season, will be as the cold waters to a wearie traveller, and as good newes from a far countrie: then will mercie be as welcome

as the raine vpon the mowne grasse. & as the shower that water the earth. Besides, we finde it true by common experience, y<sup>e</sup> the greatestt part are so dead in sin, y<sup>e</sup> if a Preacher shoulde deale after some such milde fashion, as olde Eli dealte with his sons, his sermon wil but be like a dreame when one awaketh: the hearer happely, when he is gone will think he heard something, but he knoweth not what, and because he was reprovued but softly, he will imagine that he sinned but sleightly, & so will let al slip as easily as it came gently. So y<sup>e</sup> a man y<sup>e</sup> intendeth to do any good in this frozen generation, he had neede to be rather Boanerges, one of the sons of thunder, then Bar-Ionah the son of a dove. In the Prophet Jeremy we read that y<sup>e</sup> word of the Lord is like an hammer: now if you ad that to it which Salomon saith, that the words of the wise, are like nailes it wil follow thence, y<sup>e</sup> he which is a wise maister-builder in y<sup>e</sup> Lords house, and a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, when he handleth this same hammer of the word, he will be sure to driue the nails of his exhortations to the heade, that they maye leaue some impression in the hearts of

Psal. 73, 6

1 Sam. 2, 23

Mark. 3, xvii.

Mat. xvi, xvii

Ier. 23, 19

Eccl. xii, xi.

2 Tim. 2, 15

¶ iij.

those

1 kin. 19, 11

Nah. 3, 16

Isa. 38, 14

those which heare him. Well then, this is the substance of my opinion in this point: I would haue a preacher to preach peace, and to ayine at nothing more, then the comfort of the soules of Gods people, yet I would haue him withall frame his course to the manner of Gods appearinge to Elijah: The text saith, that first a mightie strong wind rent the mountaines, and brake the rockes: then, after that came an earthquake and after the earthquake came fire: and after all these, then came a still and a soft voice. After the same manner, I woulde not haue the still and milde voyce of the Gospell come, till the stronge tempest of the law, hath rent y<sup>e</sup> stony hartes of men, and haue made their bellies to tremble, and rottenesse to enter into their bones and to cry with that good king Hezekiah: O Lord it hath oppressed me, comfort me: or at the least, because our auditories are mixt, consisting of men of diuers humors, it shall be good for him to deliuer his doctrine with that caution, that neither the humbled soules may be affrighted with the seueritye of Gods iudgementes, nor the profane and unpentant, growe presumptuous by the abound

abundance of Gods mercy.

*Nymph.* Indee I am verily perswaded, that this course which you haue named is the best: for to this best agree those properties of the word which the Apostle makes mention of: to witt, *Sharpnesse and entring through, to the diuiding asunder of the soule and the spirit, and discerning of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* But yet in the world this is a course that men like not of.

*Epaph.* No maruell: for (as I haue in part told you before in the beginnunge of our Conference) it is the greatest enemy vnto that which men loue best, and that is their owne sinne: vntill God be pleased to put a new spirit within mens bowels, and to take the stonie heart out of their bodies, there is nothing that they doe hate more, then to be reformed. But the truth is, that though no rep<sup>ar</sup>ance for the present seemeth to bee ioyous but grieuous, yet at the length, when men are better aduised, he that rebuketh shall find more fauor, then he which flatterreth with his lips. Yea, and the time will come, that those who cannot suffer wholesome doctrine, will curse the day, that euer they knewe, or hearde those sweet-tongued chaplaines, and so

D i i i j .                      thing

Heb. 4, 12

Ezec. xi, xix.

Psal. 50, 17  
Heb. xii, xi

Prou. 28, 23

2 Tim. 4, 3  
Ierc. 23, 31

1 King. 22

Ezech. 13, 18

Iere. 23, 32

Acts 20, 26

thing Zidkijahs, which haue sowed pil-  
lowes vnder their armeholes, and haue  
caused them to erre by their flatteries: and  
they will also crie shame vpon those, whō  
they now thinke to cholerick and censo-  
rious, y they did not speake more through-  
ly vnto them: therfore whatsoeuer mens  
acceptance is, it is best for vs to order the  
matter so, by speaking directly to the re-  
proue of sin, that we may be pure from the  
bloud of all men; and that noe man who  
liueth vnder our minsterie maye haue  
cause in y day of the Lorde to impute his  
slownes in repenting to our too colde, too  
mild, and couert maner of reprimouing.

*Nymph.* But what say you now, sir, to the  
third accusation: which is, that you make  
your preaching too common, and so by  
that means draw it into contempt, & make  
it to be the lesse esteemed among men? I  
can tell you there be many that are prea-  
chers themselues be of that opinion.

*Epaph.* I am the more so: and to tell  
you what I thinke plainly, I am of that  
mind, that those which blame often prea-  
ching as a fault, what colour soeuer they  
may set vpon it, yet they do it chiefly for  
the couering of their owne shame, y their  
neglig

negligence may not be taken notice of. I remember the old fable of the Fore, who hauing had a mischance and lost his tail, coming into the assembly of the beasts of the same kinde, fell to perswade them, euery one to cutte off his taile, pleadinge the cumberfomnesse and waightinesse of it, with many the like cirtumstances: but the matter coming to further scanning, it was found that the wily fore did it onely to couer his owne deformitie, which (if to be without tailes had once bene a fashion) shoulde neuer haue bene espied. I leaue you to apply it. Only I would wish all such so minded, to followe Hieromes counsell, in which hee admonished one Calphurnius, vpon some such occasion as this, that if he wanted teeth himselfe, hee shuld not be enuious against those which were able to eate. When one counselled Moses to silence Eldad & Medad, inagining that their Prophecyng in the hoast, might haue eclipsed Moses his credite, Moses liked not the aduice, but wished that all the Lords people were Prophets. But lest I should seeme too tart againste this kind of men, of whō yet there is some hope, I wil be cōtent to examin their reasons, because (as I gather by your speech)

*Ne rescentium  
dentibus, eden-  
tuus inuideat.  
Epist. 84.*

*Num. 11, 27  
28, 29*



they seeke (as the Proverbe is) to be  
mad with reason.

*Curations  
insanire.*

Num. 11, 6

They saye, the ouer-commonnesse of  
preaching, will breede contempt of prea-  
ching. First of all, suppose it fareth with  
some, in respect of preaching, as it did  
with the vnthankfull Israelites, which  
loathed the Manna, wherewith the Lord  
so miraculously fed them in the wilder-  
nesse, so they also seeme to be (as it were)  
glutted, with the continuall vse of the  
word preached: yet this can be no reason  
why a diligent and frequent Preacher  
shoulde reuinit any thing of his former in-  
dustrie, and speake more sparingly, draw-  
ing his Sermons into a smaller number,  
then he was wont. It is truly saide, that  
there are three very good mothers, which  
haue three very bad daughters, and they  
are these: 1. Truth, which yet in y<sup>e</sup> world  
breedeth hatred. 2. Weace, a great bless-  
ing of God, and yet through our corrup-  
tion it causeth Idlenesse. 3. Familiarity,  
and the comon vse of a good thing, which  
is notwithstanding mostly recompen-  
sed with Contempt. And yet this is not  
in the nature of these thinges, but onely  
in our corruption. For as the nature of  
God

God is so perfectly good, that he doth turn  
 euen verie euill thinges, into verie good  
 thinges, (as hee made the malice of the  
 Jewes, in puttinge his Sonne to death,  
 to be a meane of our saluation) so, our na-  
 ture is so absolutely euill, that it turneth  
 verie good things into euill, as sometimes  
 the grace of God into wantonnesse, and  
 Christian libertie into an occasion vnto  
 the flesh, and so in these particulars which  
 I haue named. Now because truth is ge-  
 nerally hated, shall men therefore banish  
 it from their speeches, and frame their  
 tongues to flatterie? Because many abuse  
 the blessing of peace, shall wee therefore  
 voluntarily raise tumults, or desire God  
 to put an end to our happie dayes of qui-  
 etnesse? There is in the world no reason  
 for it. Neither is there any iust cause, why  
 we should goe about to make our preach-  
 ing as it were, something more daintye,  
 because it may seeme, to some raw and ill  
 disposed stomackes, to breede a kinde of  
 fulnesse and satietie. Secondlye, if wee  
 looke better into it, wee shall see, that the  
 true cause of mens contempt of prea-  
 ching, is not so much the common vse of  
 it, as the ignorance of the worthe and ex-  
 cell

Iud. 4.  
 Gal. 5, 13

cellencie of it. The Sun, the water, the fire, what thing more common, and yet what things lesse despised : and y reason is, because we all know, we cannot liue without them. Let men be once perswaded of this, that neither the Sunne, nor water, nor fire are more necessary for the outward man, then preaching is for the soule and spirit, and that where it is wanting, there the people decay. the they will neuer be cloyed : or at least, if satietie thzough the in-bred corruption of our nature creeps vpon them, by the remembrance hereof it wil quickly be recouered. Thirdly, do but marke, what course of preaching it is, which it pleaseth some to call ouer common : namely, a settled course for euery Sabbath, and it may be some weeke day Lecture, as it is called vsually. Now I woulde faine see, how any man can say with reason, that this is ouer often. Paule commaundeth to preach in season. If this charge carrie anye waight, what better season can there be, then the Sabbath, a day of leisure a day in which men if not for conscience, yet for custome and because of the lawes assemble themselves in one place,

Prou. 29, 18

2 Tim. 4, 2

place, for the perfoꝛmaunce of one com-  
 mon dutie and seruice vnto God? I re-  
 member it is pꝛemitted as a circumſtāce  
 to the hiftorickall relation of ſome of  
 Chriſtes ſermons, that when hee ſaw the  
 multitude, and great troupes reſorted to  
 him, then hee ſpake many things to them: Mat. 5. 1, 13. *ἰσχυροὶ πολλοὶ*  
 and in another place it is ſaide, that bee-  
 holding the ſwarmer of people, and con-  
 ſidering their ſpirituall wants, euen his  
 very bowels did worke within him and he Mark. 6. 24. *ἰσχυροὶ πολλοὶ*  
 began to teach them. So no doubt it is,  
 & ought to bee with euery good Miniſter:  
 he cannot (as we ſay) find in his heart to  
 diſmiſſe a multitude aſſembled to wor-  
 ſhip God, without ſome worde of exhor-  
 tation. We thinketh, that when a Pa-  
 ſtor of a pariſh is comen into the churche  
 vpon the Sabbath day, & beholdeth his  
 whole flocke gathered together as one  
 man, he ſhould euen imagine, y<sup>e</sup> the verie  
 preſence of the people doth cal to him, (as  
 y<sup>e</sup> Rulers of the ſynagogue did to Paul and Acts 13. 15  
 Barnabas) y<sup>e</sup> if he haue any word of exhor-  
 tation for them, he ſhould ſay on. So that,  
 if to preach in ſeaſon, bee a Miniſter his  
 dutie: and the fulneſſe of an aſſembly vpon  
 y<sup>e</sup> ſabbath be a ſeaſonable occaſiō, (as

no

Isay 58, 13

2 Tim. 4, 2  
Mark. 2, 2

Preaching  
the principal  
exercife of  
the Sabaoth.

no man can denye it) I cannot see how so  
seasonable an exercife, can bee charged  
with ouer-commonnesse, or blamed as a  
meanes to make the worde of God lesse  
precious amongst men. God requireth,  
that we should call the Sabbath a delight  
to consecrate it: now, how can that daye  
be hallowed and consecrated as it ought,  
if so speciall a parte of Gods spirituall  
worship, as preaching is, be left out: how  
must not the whole other seruice of the  
daye, be euen as a lame and maymed sa-  
crifice before God? I know indeed it plea-  
seth some to saye, that the meetinge of  
the people together to the hearing of the  
worde preached (a phrase scoffed at, as  
though it were not the language of the  
Scripture) is not the chiefe institution of  
the Lordes daye. But whatsoeuer mens  
idle conceits be, yet the truth is, that the  
most excellent part of Gods seruice, con-  
sisteth in the exercife of his worde: the  
faithfull dispensing whereof is the beau-  
tie of the Lords house, and the verie life  
of the Sabbath. The other parts of Gods  
publike worship, do but as it were waite  
and giue attendance vpon this. For,  
wherefoze is prayer, but to prepare vs to  
the

the word, and to begge of God to bestow  
those blessings which are promised in the  
word: And if we will credite the Scrip-  
ture, men cannot pray till by preachinge  
they are taught to pray. How shall they  
call on him, vpon whom they haue not be-  
leeued, &c. The place is knowne well is  
Rom. 10, 14  
nough. Againe, what is the vse of the  
Sacraments, but to bee scales to the  
word: The preaching of the worde is the  
tenor of the couenant betwixt God and  
vs: the Sacraments are scales, to assure  
vs of the performanace of the gracious  
promises, made vnto vs in the word. So  
that indeed the other specialties of Gods  
worship, are of no vse, but onely so farre  
forth as they haue reference to the worde.  
In the seconde of Isaiah his prophetic,  
where the state of the Church of the Gos-  
pell is described, the people are brought  
in, prouoking one another to ascend vppe  
to the mountaine of the Lord, to the house  
of the God of Iacob. To encourage them-  
selues and other hereunto, they vse this  
reason, hee will teach vs his wayes: no  
doubt in their meetings they were to vse  
both prayer and the Sacraments. But  
yet, that there they shold be taught, was  
vse

Isay 2 3

bled as the principall motiue; because,  
 as to be taught the wayes of the Lord, is  
 Psal. 147, 19 the principall blessinge, so obedientlye to  
 heare is the principall seruice. Wherein  
 1 Sam. 15, 22 hath the Lord so great pleasure, as in this,  
 when his voice is obeyed: and howe can  
 his voyce be obeyed till it is knowne, and  
 what other ordinarie meanes of knowe-  
 ledge shall wee truste vnto besides prea-  
 ching: Seeing then the Sabbath daye is  
 a fitte time in regarde of peoples assem-  
 bling together, and seeing also the prea-  
 ching and hearing of the word, is a main  
 part of the worship of God, and by con-  
 sequence especially intended in the firste  
 institution of the Sabbath, he that inde-  
 uoureth to entertaine his people euerye  
 Lords day, with the opening and apply-  
 ing the Scriptures, cannot iustly bee ac-  
 cused to be one, who by too much famili-  
 aritie draweth the ordinance of God in-  
 to contempt.

*Nymp.* Wel, suppose it be yeelded vnto,  
 that it be good to continue the exercise of  
 Preaching euerye Sabbath day, yet it maye  
 seeme superfluous to drawe the people to  
 hearing vpon the weeke dayes, when men  
 are otherwise in their wordly affaires to be  
 employed.

*Epaph.*



*Epaph.* What is it which I was now  
 next about to speake of: I cannot say it is  
 a matter of necessitie for a Minister to tie  
 himselfe or his auditors to a week-day  
 sermon: yet if a Preacher be willing so to  
 bestowe his paines, and the people, in re-  
 specte of their dwelling together, as in ci-  
 ties and greater townes, be readie to re-  
 deeme sometime for so good a purpose, I  
 hold it verie commendable. *Ephes. 5, 16*  
 When Paul and Barnabas preached at Antioch, wee  
 reade that the Gentiles besought them  
 that they would preach those woordes to  
 them, in the space betwixte that and the  
 Sabaoth day. Nowe though I will not  
 say that that example is a lawe, yet I  
 must needes say it is an allowance to such  
 a course: and that which was commen-  
 dable in them, cannot deserue blame in o-  
 thers of Gods children, who are willing  
 to diuerte some of their time allowed for  
 outwarde busineses to spirituall occasi-  
 ons, as namely for the increasing of their  
 knoweledge, and for the edifying them-  
 selves in their most holy faith. *Iude 20*  
 Neither can such a course be moze an occasion of bzin-  
 ging preaching into contempte, then the  
 established order for meeting on wednes-  
 dayes

dayes and fridaies to praier and reading of the scriptures, can be or is an occasiō to make these good exercises to be despised.

Iecl 1, 17

*Nymph.* I haue heard some say that it is sound and learned preaching which we that are the people must wish for, and not often and continuall preaching : and that the word of God is compared to raine, which though it bee in measure profitable yet in abundance maketh the seede rotten vnder the cloddes. In like manner they say that preaching in modderation may do much good, but if it exceed, may be an occasion of barrennesse among the hearers.

2 Cor. 13, 8

*Epaph.* It is a woefull thing, that men shoulde so far stretch their wits to deceiue their owne soules, & to beguile others also. I woulde we had all learned the Apostles rule, not to do any thing against the truth, but for the truth. To satisfie you touching this that you haue named, hauing obserued it (as you say) out of the speeches of some: it is worthe the marking, how Satan in his subtiltie vnder the couloz of allowing and vrging sound preaching, would ouerthrowe diligent preaching; therein building vpon a false ground, namely, that a man cannot preach often & preach soundly.

to, which how false it is, & vnrepzonable labors of many industrious ministers in this land, are a sufficient witnes. It is a wise and holy speech of Salomon & may be wel applyed to this purpose, A slouthfull hand maketh poore, but the hand of & diligent maketh rich : and againe, There is that scattereth & is more increased, but he & spareth more thē is right, surely cōmeth to pouerty. Men of excellent gifts many times, whilst either in nicenesse fearing to hurt their bodies, or in pride, being as it were vnwilling to make themselves too common, they are more sparing in this exercise of preaching (which is the glorie of a Minister) through the iust iudgement of God lose their former perfection, & as through disuse they growe lesse willinge, getting a kind of habite of negligence, so also they become lesse able to do good in & Church of God then they were before. Now, when preaching (through default of oftē inuring thēselues vnto it) becometh more icksom, they being to sōke in many things when they shal to make preparatiō for it, then strait, because of their owne vnaptnes (& iust punishment of idleness) they conclude, & those who preach so oftē

Prou. 10, 4

Chap. 12, 14

1 Cor. 9, 16

Philip. 1, 8

1 Thes. 2, 8

Colos. 4, 3

(as they call it) preach carelesly without study and without learninge. On the other side, men (it may be) of meaner (yet commendable) gifts, who remembre the necessitie which is layed vppon them, and the woe which shall followe, if they preach not the Gospell, doe euen deuote themselves and all their studies and endeouours to the seruice of the church, and do so long after their people from the very heart-roote in Iesus Christe, that for their spiritual furtherance they could beteaume to deale euen their owne soules vnto the: Such I saye, through the blessinge of God vppon their holy labours, doe so increase in iudgement and in zeale, and haue such a doore of vtterance opened vnto them, to speake the mysterie of Christe. that as they themselves, placing a kind of felicity in the doing of their dutie, finde in themselves a certain facultie in that heavenly exercise, so the Church of God committed to them, is instructed by their soundnesse of doctrine, and whetted on by their zealous exhortations. So that to saye, that sounde preachinge is for the peoples behoofe, and not frequent preachinge, is a mere collusion, presupposing that which is

is most false, namely, that soundnesse of doctrine oftenesse of teaching cannot goe together. How litle I approue of rash aduenturing vpon this kind of exercise, that which I haue spoken formerly may witness: and how small reason there is to separate these two, profitable preaching and often preaching, I referre it to any indifferent iudgement.

*Nymph.* But because some that are reputed learned, affirme that often preaching is not so much for the peoples profite: shewe me I pray you some good reason to the contrarie, that I may be able both to preuaile against mine owne backwardnes, when I beginne to grow wearie of diligent hearing, and to prouoke others also, when I shall behold them as it were gluttied with multitude of sermons.

*Epaph.* There is a certaine disease which wee are all more or lesse infected with: our Sauour Christ calleth it slownesse of heart: this euill sicknesse being accompanied with a kinde of spirituall sleepinesse and lethargie, maketh vs (as it were) a very lump of sluggishnesse, slow in attention, slowe in vnderstanding, slowe in remembzng, slowe in practising.

Luke 24, 25  
The necessity of often preaching.

Psal. 115, 6

Iob 33, 14

Iob 42, 5

Ezech. 3, 27

1 Cor. 14, 11

1 Cor. 2, 14

First for attentio, we see it by every days experience, how like the most of our hearers are vnto the idols of the heathen, of whom the Psalme saith, y they haue eares and heare not. It is true that Elihu sayde to Iob, God speaketh once or twice, & one seeth it not: many excellent thinges, are spoken which we obserue not: we heare generally with the hearing of the eare, so that we haue all need to haue that of the Prophet often byged, He that heareth, let him heare: that so we might endenour to fetch by our hearts, to our eares, that one sound may at once pierce them both: this is our sloownes in attention: there is nothing that is heard more idly, then that which ought to be listened vnto most carefully. Secondly, for conceit & vnderstanding, our sloownes therein, squalleth our slothfulness in the former: many points are taught, & y with as much plainnes as is possible in which notwithstanding he that speaketh seemeth as it were a Barbarian vnto vs. That same natural man which perceiueth not the thinges of the spirit of God sometimes beareth too great a stroke within vs: sometimes also (God permitting it for our better hūbling) the god of this world

blindeth

blindeth our mindes, that the light of the <sup>2 Cor. 4, 4</sup>  
 gloriou: Gospell of Chr:st cānot shine vnto  
 vs. The blind man whō Chr:st healed at  
 Bethsaida, when his sight began in some  
 degrees to bee resto:red, beeing asked if he <sup>Mar. 8, 23, 24</sup>  
 saw ought, he looked vp and said I see me  
 walking as trees: he saw at the first not di-  
 stinctly, but after a confused maner. I ap-  
 ply it thus: we are all by nature blind in  
 the best things, and because they are spi- <sup>1 Cor. 2, 14</sup>  
 ritually discerned. of our selues we cannot  
 see them: now when it pleaseth God  
 (which commandeth the light to shine out  
 of darknes) to shine in our hearts, we haue <sup>2 Cor. 4, 6</sup>  
 at y first but as it were a certaine glimpie  
 of heauenly matters, the precise and exact  
 knowledge is not by and by attained.  
 Thirdly, touching memozy, how great  
 weaknes there is in it, I cal euery mans  
 conscience to witnes. Indeed wee see how  
 surely and how long men can remember  
 in itters of the world. The vncharitable  
 and malicious man will remember an e-  
 uill turne many a yere, waiting still an  
 oportunitie to reuenge it. The olde man  
 hath so fresh an impression of the toyes &  
 vanities of his youth, y he will make you  
 as persute a relation of them with euerye



circumſtance, as if they had bene done but yeſterday. The couetous worldling, though perhappes hee can neither write nor reade, nor hath anye to keepe his rekeninges, yet hee can remember all his bargaines, all his conditions in bargaining, all his dayes, and houres, & places, either for the payment or receipt of anye thinge. The young man or woman can ſoone learne without booke many a ballad or idle Loue-ſong, tending to the increaſing or ſtirring vype of vncleanneſſe : and ſo it ſareth in other particulars . But come now to matters of religion & piety, alaſſe how true is it that the concept of them is as ſoone gone from our mindes, as the ſound from the eares? When Dauid enquired of Ahimaaz comming from the camp, touching Abſolom, his anſwer was, I ſaw a great tumult, but I knew not what. Like to this will be the anſwere of a great many, when at their returne from the houſe of God they are demaunded touching the particulars there deliuered; they will ſay, they ſaw a man ſpeakinge, and heard the noiſe of his voyce, and behelde his geſture, but they knowe not what, they can tell little of that which  
was

2 Sam. 18, 29

was uttered by him. Lastly, for slownes  
in practise, it is longe before, (after longe  
hearing) wee are brought to inclyne to a  
good dutie, and yet after some good dispo-  
sition to it, there are so manye delayses,  
and so many pul-backes, yea and after a  
reasonable beginning so manye fallinges  
backe, and so much waxing weary of well  
doing, that we are too well like Salomons  
suggard, who it maye bee maketh manye  
offers of rising, yet whilest he cryeth, Yet  
a little sleep, a litle slumber, the time stea-  
leth away, and his vineyard is all growne  
ouer with thornes for want of husbandry.  
This is our deuotie sicknes of slownesse  
of heart: The best ordinarie remedye a-  
gainst this disease, is often preachinge,  
as you shall see if you well examine it.  
Continuall calling vpon, at last through  
a kind of impoꝛtunitie will win vs to at-  
tention. Often repetition of the same  
pointes will both cleare the vnderstan-  
ding and settle the iudgment also. It grie-  
ueth me not (saith Paul) to write the same  
things to you and for you it is a sure thing.  
That which after many times deliuerye  
is stil committed to forgetfulnesse, yet at  
the last it is laid vp in the mids of the hart,  
and

Gal. 6, 9

Prou. 5, 10

Prou. 24, 31

Philip. 3, 1

Prou. 4, 22

circumſtance, as if they had bene done but yeſterday. The couetous worldling, though perhappes hee can neither write nor reade, nor hath anye to keepe his rekeninges, yet hee can remember all his bargaines, all his conditions in bargaining, all his dayes, and houres, & places, either for the payment or receipt of anye thinge. The young man or woman can ſome learne without booke many a ballad or idle Loue-ſong, tending to the increaſing or ſtirring vpp of vncleanneſſe : and ſo it ſareth in other particulars . But come now to matters of religion & piety, alasse how true is it that the concept of them is as ſone gone from our mindes, as the ſound from the eares? When Dauid enquired of Ahimaaz coming from the camp, touching Abſolom, his answer was, I ſaw a great tumult, but I knew not what. Like to this will be the answer of a great many, when at their returne from the houſe of God they are demaunded touching the particulars there deliuered; they will ſay, they ſaw a man ſpeakinge, and heard the noiſe of his voyce, and behelde his geſture, but they knowe not what, they can tell little of that which was

2 Sam. 18, 29

was uttered by him. Lastly, for slownes in practise, it is longe befoze, (after longe hearing) wee are brought to inclyne to a good dutie, and yet after some good disposition to it, there are so manye delayes, and so many pul-backes, yea and after a reasonable beginning so manye fallinges backe, and so much waxing weary of well doing, that we are too well like Salomons

Gal. 6, 9

sluggard, who it maye bee maketh manye offers of rising, yet whilest he cryeth, Yet a litle sleep, a litle slumber, the time stea-

Prou. 6, 10

leth away, and his vineyard is all growne ouer with thornes for want of husbandry. This is our droowlie sicknes of slownesse of heart: The best ordinary remedye against this disease, is often preachinge, as you shall see if you well examine it. Continuall calling vpon, at last through a kind of importunitie will win vs to attention. Often repetition of the same pointes will both cleare the vnderstanding and settle the iudgment also. It grie-

Prou. 24, 31

ueth me not (saith Paul) to write the same things to you, and for you it is a sure thing.

Philip. 3, 1

That which after many times deliuerye is stil committed to forgetfulnesse, yet at the last it is laid vp in the mids of the hart,

Prou. 4, 22

and

and the negligence and backwardnesse  
of many p̄sres, yet in the end (the wordes  
Eccles. 12, 11 of the wile Preacher being like goades) is  
drawne vnto some cōfortable perfection.  
If often preaching may lawfullye bee  
complained of, who haue iust cause to  
gōe vnder the burden of it, then wee  
that are Ministers? For besides the wa-  
king of the bodie's health, and the consu-  
ming of the vitall parts thereof, what a  
griefe is it to a mans soule, to lift vpe his  
voice to them which will not heare? what  
a death and toyle to make infinite repe-  
titions of the same principles? what a  
beration to beate the aire? what a discour-  
agement and euen the killing of a mans  
heart, to haue to doe with those whose  
neck is an iron sinew, & their brow brasle?  
and yet though these things might make  
a man to resolue with Ieremye, to speake  
no more in Gods name, yet we haue no  
such commission to giue ouer, but we are  
commaunded still to bee instant, with all  
long suffering, prouing if God at any time  
will giue repentance. If a preacher should  
put forth such a question to Chyriste tou-  
ching preaching, as Perer did touchinge  
forgiuing & should say, Master how longe  
wilt

Isay 58, 1

*Occidit mife-  
ros crumbe re-  
petita magist.*

1 Cor. 9, 26

Isay 48, 4

Iere. 20, 9

2 Timo. 4, 2  
chap. 2, 25

Mat. 18, 22

wilt thou that I preach vnto a stif-necked  
and obstinate people? vnto seuen times? I  
doubt not but he would returne him the  
like answer that he did to Peter, I say not  
to thee, vnto seuen times, but vnto seuentie  
times seue times. When Peter & his com-  
pany had trauelled in fishing all night, &  
had take nothing, neuertheles at thy word  
(sayd he to Christ) I wil let down the net:  
The Lord hath called vs to be Fishers of  
men. And though it be a great hart-brea-  
king to haue laboured long to small pur-  
pose, yet for our Masters sake there is  
further trial. to be made, hoping that yet  
at the length that long-expected draught  
will come, and accounting our selues  
happy, and all our pains well bestowd,  
if with all that we can do, we shall gaine  
one soule vnto God. To shut vp this  
point then, if we shall duely weigh our  
owne backwardnes, and withal the Mi-  
nistres duty, of whom that instant dili-  
gence is required, we shal then see that it  
is much and often preaching which we  
must wish for, beseeching the Lord to  
pardon that aboue all things, if we shall  
find the worde (through the common vse  
of it) to grow vile before vs.

Luke 5, 5.

Matth. 4, 19

Nymph.

*Nymph.* You haue said wel to this point, onely you haue forgotten the similitude of the raine, which may be some occasion of doubt to vs that are common men, both because we finde in the scripture the worde of God to be compared to the raine, and because also in common experience wee feelee the inconuenience of too great abundance of raine.

*Epiph.* I had not forgotten it, though if I had, it were not much materiall, it being indeede ( but for the satisfiying of your minde ) scarce worthe the answeringe. Wee haue a rule in schooles, that borrowed speeches do make no grounded arguments; and for scripture similitudes it is certain, that by pressing euery thing that is applyed by the spirit of God for some speciall illustration, a man shall runne into a world of absurdities; accordinge as the Papistes in their violent wizinging of many parables, to giue some colour to their vile opinions, asford vs noe small number of examples. It is true, the worde of God is in the holy Scripture compared to raine, and that very fitly: because as the raine, fallinge vppon the Lande, maketh it either more fruitfull

μὴ διαλεκτὸν  
ταῖς μεταφοφαί.

Isa. 55, 10, 11



fruitfull or moze barren, according to the nature of the soyle vpon which it falleth; so the word that goeth out of the mouth of the Lord, doeth not returne vnto him voide, but it becommeth either the sauour of life vnto life, or of death vnto death to those which heare it : making the childe of God moze zealous of Good workes, and the wicked moze outragious. I doe not find in the scripture the similitude of raine, when it is applied to the worde to haue any further meaning : and therefore to stretch it further according to a mans owne priuate fancy, is to forget the Apostles rule of vnderstandinge accordinge to sobrietie; and wilfully to continue in such a practise, is no other but to peruert the Scriptures to a mans owne destruction. The Lord doeth in the scripture threaten it as a plague, to take away the Prophet, and to send a famine of hearing the word; and he promiseth it also as a blessing, to giue pastors which shall feede the people with knowledge and vnderstanding, and watchmen which all the daye and all the night continuallye shall not cease : but I do not remember that euer I read, either often preachinge threatned as a curse,

2 Cor. 2, 16

Titus 2, 14

Rom. 12, 3

2 Pet. 3, 16

Isay. 3, 2  
Amos 8, 12

Iere 3, 15

Isay 62, 6

or selborne and thinne preaching promised as a blessing. And surely, if, as abundance of rayne, so abundance of preaching were a punishment, I doubt not but the good lawes of our Church, which haue prescribed a praier againste overmuch raine, might well set downe the same course in respect of much preaching: from which notwithstanding euery honest mans eares would abhorre. And therefore I will be bold to conclude, that this reason pressing the similitude of rain and moysture to be the washing away of dilligent preaching and hearing from out of Gods Church, is a very dry reasonne, which though it may apper to haue some taste of wit, yet hath scarcely any smack of honesty.

Matth. 9. 38

*Nymp.* I pray God therefore we may remember to make the praier which our Sauer taught vs, namely, that *the Lorde of the harvest would send forth labourers into his harvest*, & that he would so furnish them with giftes of knowledge, of viterance, and of zeale, that they may vrge and call vpon vs continually: for (as you truly saide) wee are so slow and backward, that except we be

be dayly pricked forward and rouzed vp,  
we sha'l grow cold and carelesse, and be e-  
uen frozen vpo the dregs of our own secu-  
ritie. I know sir, that in good manners it is  
now high time to forbear troubling you  
anye further, yet I woulde gladly craue  
your direction in one thinge more; and  
that is this: for mine owne parte I thanke  
God, I both doe, and euer (since I had  
any tast of goodnesse) haue loued preach-  
ing, onely I find a great defect in my selfe  
that I cannot so profite by it as I woulde,  
and as I see manye doe. I am bolde there-  
fore to intreate you to shewe mee howe  
and by what meanes I maye heare pro-  
fitably, both for the settling of my iudge-  
ment, and for the increase of holinesse  
in my common conuersation. The hu-  
mours of many men, are heerein verie  
strange: some say that th ere are such dif-  
ferences of opinions among you that  
bee learned, that a common manne kno-  
weth not which of you to beleue: others  
hold an opinion that it is not for pryuate  
ordinarie persons, to take vppon them to  
argue or iudge of those things they heare;  
so that the onely resolution of the greatest  
part is, that it is the safest and wisest waye  
either

1 Tim. 1, 6

Mat. 5, 13

either not to heare, or else if for satisfying the lawes they must heare, yet not to giue credit. Besides, there are many of vs which heare vsually, and yet are little bettered by it: their knowledge is but *vaine iangling* and their conuersation not much differing from the irreligious multitude: they are like the fish in the sea, which howbeit it liueth in the salt water, yet is without al taste of saltnesse. So though they liue vnder a settled ministerye (which is *the salt of the earthe*) yet being tasted, wil be found viterly without any true seasoninge. Nowe if it myght be, I would be loth to be in this number: and therefore my last (though not my least) suite vnto you, is to affoorde me your best counsel in this case.

*Epaph.* I must needs commend your good care in this matter: for indeed whatsoeuer men think, there is nothing so full of daunger as is idle and vnprofitable hearing. Those things which are in their owne nature best, being ill vsed, become most hurtfull. Hearing is the ordinance of God to drawe vs vnto himselfe: but being vsed carelesly and vnprofitably, it turneth to our greater condemnation: and therefore you cannot be too carefull herein.

herein. It is true that men pretend many things whereby to shifte off the diligence which is required in this behalfe: but their pretences being examined, will become lighter then vanitie it selfe. They say, we that are Preachers cannot agree amongst our selues; that is not absolutely true: for blessed be God many of vs doe proceede by one rule, and doe minde one thing. Besides, so long as we liue here in the worlde, our vnderstanding is mixed with the darkenesse of ignorance, and by reason thereof, there cannot chuse but be differences of opinions in some things euen amongst the best. Take me three or foure, or halfe a dozen, which are dimme sighted, and cannot see without spectacles, if you sette them to descric a thinge a farre off, they will be of diuers and contrarie opinions touching it: nowe Sainte Paul sayth, that in this life, wee doe but see, as in a glasse darkly: and therefore our iudgementes in all thinges at all times cannot be the same. Moreover, it pleaseth the Lord sometimes for their punishment, which haue not receiued the loue of the truth, & for the discouery of those which are approoued, to giue leaue vnto  
sathan

Phil. 3, 16

1 Cor. 13, xii

2 Thes. 2, x

2 Kin. 22, 22

Matth. 7, 15

Prou. 23, 23

sathan to be a fallie spirit in the mouthes of some, and to suffer them to come amongst vs in heepes clothing, though inwardly they are rauening wolues. Now the possibilitie of being deceiued when we heare, ought rather to increase our care in hearing, then to be an occasion of unwillingnesse to heare. This may be manifested by a plaine similitude: Salomon exhorting vs to be carefull to obtaine the knowledge of Gods truth, deliuereth his exhortation in these words, Buy the truth: from this kind of speech I reason thus: If a man wanting necessaries, as meat and rayment, and being aduised to furnish himselfe from the market, shoulde make this answer: The worlde is so full of deceit, that a man knoweth not whome to trust, those which sell, many of them will not sticke to beguile their owne fathers, and the trickes and deuises that tradesmen haue are infinit, so that it is twenty to one, but a man in chafering with them shall be beguiled, I had rather therefore go neare the wind, and want necessarie prouision, then put it to the aduenture of buyinge. If I say, a man pleade thus, what would we thinke of him, but that  
either

either he were very foolish or very forward? And indeed we might well so esteeme him, because we know that the fraud of others must be prevented rather with care and circumspection, and not vsed as an occasion of abridginge a mans selfe of necessaries. Is not he then as much a foole, who wanting the saving knowledge of the truth, and being called vpon to repaire vnto the house of God, (which is as it were the Lords market, in which the hid treasures of wisdom and knowledge are laid open to the view and offered freely to the vse of all men) shall estsones plead the deceiueablenesse of false doctrine, the corruption of many Preachers, the shew of some contrarieties among them? Yes verily, for is he to deprive himselfe of the necessarie foode of his soule, because it may be for lacke of care, that in stead of hoping to be fed, he may be popsoned? Nay rather, he is to become the more warie, the more diligent in prayer, the more exercised in the Scripture, that when he cometh to buy the truth he may not be deceiued.

*Nymph.* Truly you say well: onely it seemeth you build vpon a false ground (at least



in the opinion of some,) namely, that wee which are priuate men, may iudge of that which we heare, and examine it whether it be the trueth or no: I desire therefore that you would proue that point well vnto me.

*Epaph.* Indæd it is the opinion of poperie, that it is not for euerie particular person of himselfe, to examine, trie or iudge, which is true or false doctrine, who is a true or false doctoz: and it is a principle in that Church, that it suffiseth a common man to giue his consent to the church and to beleue as the Pastors beleue. But all the true Ministers of Iesus Christ are of another iudgemente: for howesouer we doe vrge all reuerent respect to the preaching of the worde, as to the ordinance of God, yet we take not vppon vs to haue dominion ouer the faith of our hearers, as though we woulde binde them to giue credite to euerie thing we speake, by the authoritie of our name (as Ambrose his words are) therefore because we speake it. And in truth there is nothing more manifest in Scripture then this, that the people oughte iudicially to examine the doctrine taught, befoze they dare to entertaine it.

Paul

*Rhem. Testa.*  
*vpon 1 Io. 4, 1*

Priuate men  
may & ought  
to iudge of  
that which  
they heare.

*2 Cor. 1, 24*

*Ambros. in 1*  
*Thef. Cap. 5.*

Paul to the Galathians sayeth thus,  
 Though wee or an Angell from heauen,  
 preach vnto you otherwise thẽ that which Galat. 1, 8  
 we haue preached vnto you, let him be ac-  
 cursed. Nowe if he which preacheth con-  
 trarie to the reuealed trueth be accursed,  
 surely the case of him which giueth credit  
 to him must needes be dangerous: and  
 therefore for the auoydance of the daun-  
 ger, it is mēte for euerie man to bee fully  
 perswaded in his owne minde, that he may  
 discern things that differ one from ano-  
 ther. The Thessalonians are willed to  
 trie all things: those to whom Saint Iohn  
 wrote, are counselled to trie the spirites.  
 Salomon hath branded him for a foole,  
 who will belieue euerie thing. It is a dis-  
 grace for menne professing religion to be  
 like childrē caried with euerie wind of do-  
 ctrine. It is an honoz to be like the gentle-  
 men of Berea, who searched the scriptures  
 daily, whether those things which the Apo-  
 stles taught were so. Christ saith, that his  
 sheepe know his voice, and will not follow  
 a stranger. What can bee more expresse  
 then thẽ testimonies? Let any manne  
 consider the places and the parties to  
 whome these commandements of taking

Rom. xiiii, 5,  
 in the iij. vñ.

Paul 1. x.

1 Thes. 5, xxi

1 Iohn 4, i.

Pro. xiiii, xv

Ephe. 4, xiiii.

Acts xvii, xi.

Ioh. x, 4, 5.

tryall of the doctrine were directed, and he shall find that no one man is exempted from this dutie of examining.

A similitude  
like to this,  
in the same  
case Chrysos-  
tome hom. 13  
vpon 2. Cor.

*Nymph.* Indeed me thinketh it standeth with some reason that wee should trie the doctrine which we heare before we credit it: for otherwise we may soone be drawne into many errors: we haue a Proverbe, that a man must tell many euē after his owne father, not in distrustfulnesse as though wee thought he would deceiue, but in wisdom, because vnwittingly hee may be deceiued. No doubt we ought to be much more circumspect in matters of doctrine, because euen the best that teache, in that they are men may erre, and because also in matters of that nature, to bee deceiued, is so exceeding dangerous. But all the matter is how to iudge, and by what meanes to bee able to know truth from falshood, wholesome from vnwholesome doctrine.

the Scripture  
the only iudg  
of Doctrine.

*Epaph.* Know this therfore for a truth, that in all cases and controuersies of religion, the Scripture onely must be admitted as vmpire, and euery thing must stand or fall at y<sup>e</sup> determining thereof: for therfore hath the Lord commanded it to be written and to bee made common to all,

all, that by it all controuerfies might bee decided, all doubts refolved, all hereties confuted, all truth confirmed, euery conſcience guided, euery mans life fcaued.

Nothing is found that is diſagreeing fro it, nothinge vnſounde that is conſonante thereunto. We are well contented to let that abſurditie dwell with the parentes of it, the Papifts: namely, that the Scripture is rather to be feared an admoniſher then a Iudge: let it be their glorie, to thinke baſely of the written worde, and to aſcribe the authoritie of iudginge to vnwritten verities and traditions, rather then to it. We haue learned that the Law which is come forth of Sion, and the word of the Lord that hath iſſued from Ieruſalem muſt be iudge amongſt the nations: and we are comanded to appeale ſtill to the Law and to the teſtimonie, aſſuring our ſelues, that there is no light in them, which I ſpeake not according to this word. We find that our Sauour himſelf ſtood to the iudgement and tryall of the Scripture. Paul ſubmitted his doctrine to the ſame rule. We read the learned in former ages, to giue the priuiledge of iudging onely to the Scripture. Auguſtin

*Commonitorium  
non regula. Bal  
Lind. lib 1.  
Panop. cap. 9.*

*Iſay 2, 34.*

*Iſay. 8, 20*

*Iob. 5, 39*

*Acts 17, 2. et  
28, 23.*

*Aug. contra  
Max. Arrian.  
lib. 3, cap. 14*

*Lib. de Pastor*

*Bas. Epist. 8.*

*Cyprian in ser.  
de Bapt. Chr.*

*Chrysost. Hom.  
13. in 2 Cor.  
πρὸς Κορινθίους,  
τὴν 12. πρὸς  
Ῥωμ.*

disputing with a chief Arrian, saith thus: Let vs dispute by the authoriye of the Scriptures, which are indifferent witnesses to vs both. And in another place: The Epistles of Bishops giue place one vnto another, and Councils are mended one by another, but the canonicall Scripture, that is the rule of all, and must correct all. Basil the Great demaundeth that against all heretiques the Scripture onely be the vmpire Cyprian saith, that the rules of all doctrines haue flowen from the Scripture. Chrysostome willeth his hearers to fetch all things from the Scripture. But what shold we stand vpon the testimonies of men, when the forealleadged places out of the written text are so apparant? Wherefore to prepare you to the trying of the doctrines which you heare, hold this firme ground, that all points must receiue their allowance from the Scripture.

*Nymp.* I coulde easily agree to you in this that you haue said, but that there is this difficultie therein, namely, how to make vse of the Scripture, and to apply it to this worthy purpose of finding out the truth thereby. You that are schollers, and haue the helps

helpes of learning, and of the Artes and tongues, may make better shift in these cases, then we plain men of the country can. There is no man that preacheth, but he al- leageth the Scripture, and socarieth it that it may seeme to be absolutely for him, in that which he auoucheth : so that vnlesse we be taught, how to iudge by the Scrip- ture, we shall still be in suspencie.

*Epaph.* You haue made a verve need, full motion; and therefore, if you will listen to it, I will acquaint you with that course whereof my selfe both in my pri- uate studies, and in hearing others pub- likely, haue had very comfortable expe- rience. First of all when you haue occa- sion and oportunitie to heare, you must remember Salomons aduice, to take heed to your eies, and to vse some preparatiō before hand, praying the Lorde to open your eies, that you may see the wonders of his law, and that his spirit of truth may be with you to leade you into all truth. *Sec- condly*, you must labor by all meanes, to subdue & suppress the seeming wisdom of your owne heart, resolving to yeld vp your self to whatsoever y<sup>e</sup> Lord reueales, though it bee altogether crossing to your owne

how to make  
vse of the  
scripture for  
the trying of  
the truth.

Eccles. 4, xvi

Psal. cxix, 18

Ioh. xvi, xiii

Owne reason, and displeasing to nature.

1 Pet. 5, 5

Rom. 1, 22

Psal. 25, 9, 14

For as God resisteth the proud, and maketh them which professe themselves wise to become fooles : so hee will guide the meeke in iudgement, and teach the humble his way, and reueale his secrets to them that feare him. Thirdlye, when you haue thus framed and fitted your self by prayer and humilitie, bee sure to remember this rule especiallye ; namely, that that doctrine is the truest, which maketh most for Gods glozve, most for the comforte & reliefe of a wounded conscience, most for the restraining and curbinge of our corrupt nature, and fleshly affections. Mark a little, and I will shew you the reason of this rule. First of all, the ende why God made all thinges, was the glozve of his owne name : the thing especially aymed at by him, in that great and admirable worke the redemption of mankind, and in all the particulars of it, even from the first foundation of it, his eternall election, unto the last end hereof, our glorification in heauen, is : That no flesh might glorie in his presence, but that he that glorieth might glorie in the Lord. This being then the maine end of all Gods courses,

to

Prou. 16, 4

1 Cor 1, 29, 31

in auxilium



to keepe the glorie of all things entire vnto himselfe, it must needes bee, that that doctrine is the most sounde, which doth not admitte the leaste empeachment of Gods glorie. Secondly, one chiefe end of the Scripture is, as to beat downe man, and to cleane strippe him of all goodnesse and inclination thereunto, for the keeping of Gods glorie whole vnto himselfe, so also to put gladnesse into all distressed hearts, and to bring the ioy of saluation to all afflicted spirits. David saythe it is one propertie of the word of God to reioyce the heart: And Paul affirmeth that the drift of all the Scripture is, that wee through patience and comfort thereof might haue hope. So that, looke what doctrine bringeth the fullest comforte, to a poore soule when it is euen at the depth of sorrowe, that must needes be wholesome doctrine, seeing it concurreth with the whole scope of the Scripture. Thirdly, one thinge principally intended, in the discouerye of that grace of God which bringeth saluation vnto all men, was, that vngodlinesse and worldlye lustes should be denyed, that the fleshe with the affections and lust should be crucified, that the body  
of

Psal. 51, 12

Psal. xix, 8

Rom. 15, 4

Tit. ii, xi. xii.

Galat. 5, 24

Rom. 6, 6

Col. 3, 5.

Luk 1, 74, 75

of sinne shoulde bee destroyed, and that mortifying our members which are on the earth, wee should serue the Lorde, all the daies of our life in holinesse and righteousnesse before him. And therefore that doctrine which p̄sseth vpon men, the most precise and strict obedience to Gods will, not giuing any the least toleration to any the smallest sinne, but still brideling mā's naturall inclination vnto euill, that is the truth of God which euery seruante of God ought to entertaine. Tell me now, vnderstand you this direction?

*Nymp.* Yea truly, I do in some measure vnderstand it; yet if you shal please by one or too examples to shew the vse of it, I shal the better perceiue it, and know the rather how and after what sort to apply it.

*Epaph.* I will not sticke with you for that: because I am very willing to satisfie you in this matter. For y<sup>e</sup> first branch therefore touchinge the glorie of God, take this example. We teach at this day, that faith onely iustificth: our meaning is, that the very thing, which maketh a man stande righteous before God, and to bee accepted to liue euerlasting, is, the imputed righteousness of Christ Iesus: which  
right,

righteousness is appropriated and ap-  
 plied to vs onely by faith. Others (as  
 the Papists) say, that to the iustifying of  
 a sinner before God, two things are re- *Bellarmino de In-*  
 quired, remission of sinnes, and the habit *ist. lib. 2, cap. 7*  
 of inward righteousness, that is to saye,  
 charitie with the fruites thereof. So that  
 we exclude, they establish the meritt of  
 mans workes. Well then, in this differ-  
 ence of opinion, there being learned men  
 on both sides, and Scripture alleaged on  
 both sides, you desire to know which is  
 the truth: bring them both to the touch-  
 stone, & see which of the two maketh most  
 for y<sup>e</sup> glory of God, & the matter will soon  
 be answered, the doubt will quickly be  
 cleared. Consider therfore how euen the  
 Apostle Paule by this rule decideth this  
 controuersie: by what law (saith he) that *Rom. 3, 27*  
 is, by what meanes of saluation, is bo-  
 asting excluded? Not by the law of works,  
 but by the law of faith. Whereupon he con-  
 cludeth, therefore a man is iustified by faith  
 without the workes of the Law. And  
 indeede the reason is excellent: for if  
 man coulde by any of his owne doinges,  
 further his owne saluation, or procure  
 the increase of glorie in heauen,  
 he

he had then some matter of glozping, and might (as it were) account himselfe the lesse beholden vnto God. But iustificati-  
on by faith onely, taketh all vtterly from man, and ascribeth his whole saluation, the beginning, middle, and endinge vnto the Lord: so haue you both an example of this rule, and warrant for it, being vsed by the Apostle to decide so great a contro-  
uerſie: and I am sure, that you shall finde it of very great vse in many maine points of our religion. Secondly, for the seconde branch of the rule which is about the com-  
fort and reliefe of a distressed and distra-  
cted conscience; marke this particular for the manifestation of the force of the rule. It is taught and maintained in our Church, that a Christian man may bee vnfallibly certaine of his saluation in his owne conscience in this life, and that by an ordinarie and speciall faith. Others there are (both Papistes, and some also amongst our selues) which holde that the certaintye of saluation, which in this life can bee attained to, is onely coniecturall and probable ground-  
ed onely vpon likelihoods: and this cer-  
taintie they confesse to be vncertaine, and  
such

such as manye times doth deceiue. Beholde, heere is a great controuerſie, and much is ſaid on either ſide: now you that are a private man, woulde gladly knowe to which parte you maye ſafely encline, and what to reſt vpon as the alone truth in this caſe. My aduiſe is therefore, that for your full ſatisfaction herein, you ſcan the matter by this rule: ſuppoſe a ſpirit deeply wounded, a conſcience ſet as it were vpon the racke, ſeeing nothing in God but iuſtice and maiesty, and a conſuming fire; finding nothing in it ſelf but ſinne and corruption, and infinite matter of deſpaire, ſo that by this meanes it is brought to ſuch an exigent, that it knoweth not which way to turne, but is euen readie to crie out with Paule, Who ſhall Rom. 7, 24  
deliver me? Enquire now which of thoſe two doctrines doth affoord the beſt comfort in this wofull caſe, that will quickly appeare: for the one holdeth the conſcience in a continuall ſuspence, the other laboureth to ſettle it in the firme aſſurance of Gods vchangeable loue in Chriſt Jeſus: the one bringeth a plaister, but much too little for the ſore, telleth of the riches of Gods mercie, of the depth  
of

of his lone, of the vnsearchable sufficiency of Christs merite, but yet denyeth the soule to be assured of a particuler interest into it, and by that meanes rather increaseth then relieueth the anguish: the other applyeth the medicine to euery parte of the wounde, sheweth Christ, discovereth the riches of Christe, and putteth the amazed heart into a full, assured, and comfortable possession of Christ. So that whatsoeuer shall bee argued to the contrarie, you may be bold to bulde vpon that which bringeth the most ioyfull and welcome tidinges to an affrighted conscience: that is best agreeing to the scope of the Scripture, that cometh nearest to the nature of the Gospel. Come now to the third brāch, which is concerning the libertie of the flesh, and let me giue an instance of that also. There is at this day a doctrine, (almost openly taught, or at least tolerated by manye that shold teach otherwise) namely, that a man may do well inough, without so much preaching: that it is not a matter of that great necessitie to frequent the places of Gods publike seruice, but that a body may do wel inough at home, with  
some

Some private deuotions : that common men need not trouble themselves greatly with the scripture, or with knowledge in religion : that the religious spendinge of the Sabbath is a thing indifferent : that often communicating at the Lords table is not of any great importance, but that once or twice in a yere is as good as euery day : that it is not good to be too forwards in matters of religion, ouerstrait in conuersation: that God wil beare with many sinfull matters, &c. On the other side, there is a doctrine that telleth vs and prometh vnto vs, that if wee desire to walke and to liue so as may please God, and as becommeth Christians, wee must make conscience of often hearing the word, wee must as new born babes desire the sincere : *Pet. 2, 2* milke thereof, that we may grow thereby, neuer contentinge our selues with any measure of knowledge : we must strine & straine our selues, though sometime it be with some trouble and diseasinge of our bodies, to come to y<sup>e</sup> places of Gods worship, and to giue attendance at the postes of the doores of the Lords house: we must *Prou. 8, 33* cal the Sabbath a delight to consecrate it, restinge not onely from labour, but from *Isay 58, 13*



all things that may disable vs and make vs more vnfit for Gods seruice, either in respect of preparation before it, or of conference and meditation after it : we must for the strengthening of our faith, and the soleimne remēbring of the death of Christ oftē communicate : we must in our liues walk circumspectly, with zeale & courage and opennesse in the practise of religion : we must make conscience of the smallest sin, & neuer thinke we haue done enough in the duties of holye obedience. Here is againe a new question, and you perhaps in some of these particulars, thzough the diuersity of opiniōs, may be vnresolved. If you demaund of me, how you may be stablished, I refer you to this rule; search & consider which of the two tendeth most directly to the yoking & hampering and restraining of mans naturall disposition: that wilsonē appere if you looke out into the world, & hearken how these doctrines are entertained : for the former, who so shall teach it, or sēme to approue it, no doubt that man shal haue many followers and many fauorers: for doth not euerie man almost like it & wish it that there should be lesse preaching : that it shoulde  
be

be free to spend the Sabbath, euery one as himselfe listeth: to receiue the Communion when men think good: to neglect knowlege: to banish y<sup>e</sup> Bible out of their houses, or else to let it ly like old harnesse rusting for lacke of occuppyng: wil it not by and by be receiued, that it is not good for men to bee precise, to be ouer scrupulous, to stande to nicely vpon pointes: Surely he that shold teach this, I might say of him as the Prophet spake of olde, He were a Preacher for the people. But now for the other doctrine, see what an Micah, 2, 11 acceptation it hath in the world: fie vpon it will one saye, what a tedious thinge is this to heare so manye sermons. what a trouble to come so often to the Church, what a misery to be restrained from our Sunday-sports, what a dull time wil it be and how long will the day seeme if thus we be limited: what neede so many communions: what should men be so hot and earnest in religiō: if this once take place, farewell all mirth, farewell all good companye, adiew to all thriuing, if this bee hearkned vnto. This is and will be the entertainment of this doctrine: it wil be reputed as the Prophets sermons were

of olde, euen the Burden of the Lorde. So by the generall yeelding oꝝ gaynesayinge of the multitude, it may soone appeare which of the two is the greatest enemye to the flesh: and therefore you both maye and must conclude with the latter doctrine, that that is from aboue, because it meeteth with our corruption at euery turne, and is still beating it downe, labouringe to keepe it within compasse. And by this rule (to gayne it the moze credit) Paule toke vp the question among the Galathians, touchinge the vse of Christian liberty, setting it downe foꝝ a ground: that it is then best vsed when it is not vsed as an occasion to the flesh, but with a holy respect to become seruantes each to other by loue, Thus I haue (foꝝ your better vnderstanding) giuen you an example of euery bzanch of this rule, that you may know how to apply it; assuring you out of mine owne poore experience, that there are very few of the fundamentall points of religion, which directly concerne the worshyppe of God, oꝝ our conuersation with men, but they maye receiue their triall by this Canon, and maye truely be sayed to stand oꝝ fall,

accoꝝ

Gal. 5, 13

according to the iudgement and verdict thereof.

*Nymph.* I thanke you vnfaignedly for this direction; yet touching this latter branch, it seemeth to me that there may bee some doubtmade, because the popish religion is thought to restraine and punish the flesh more then ours: for it imposeth manye very straight things and vnpleasing, as fasting, pennance, going barefoote, pilgrimage, payings of money, to purchase prayers when men are dead, and diuers the like: I praye you therefore cleare mee in this onely doubt, and then I am satisfied.

*Epap.* I say in one word of all these, as Paule did of things very like, They haue Col. 2, 23 indeede a shew of wisedome in voluntarie religion, and humbleness of mind, and in not sparing the bodye: but yet another waye they giue greater libertye: for when it is taught that these thinges are meritorious, and of worth to doe alwaye many sinnes, what will not a man bee content to do, for a weeke or an houre, or a short time, for the removinge of the sinnes of his whole life? and who will not be content when hee is dyinge,

to giue all that awayne which hee must needs leaue behind, for the deliuey of his soule from a supposed purgatory? Who wold not go an hundred miles on pilgrimage to the thyrine of such or such a saint, to be assured that it shall be his discharge for the remainder of his life? So that though these bodilye impositions maye seeme somethinge straight one way, yet they giue trebble libertie another waye, and therefore may truly be sayde, rather to be an occasion to the flesh, then to limit the corruption of the flesh.

*Nymph.* It is very true, for what will a man feare to doe, so longe as he is taught, and by teaching perswaded, that by almes deeds and fasting (falsly so caled) and some legacies bequeathed to religious vses (as they terme them) or by conformitie to the penall iniunctions of a priest, he may make sufficient satisfaction? therefore I hold this for answer enough to that obiection.

*Epaph.* Well neighbor, to let that passe, & to follow the motion which you made, I must to y<sup>e</sup> former rule adde one thinge, which is this: Take heede by all meanes of such eares as the Apostle calleth itching eares, and of delighting to get an heap  
of

of teachers. It is a dangerous humoꝛ to affect variety of instructoꝛs, and it must needs cause distraction : it filleth mens heads with a woꝛlde of idle questions, & draweth them into vaine iangling. It is Satans policy as long as he can to holde men in ignorance, and in the contempt or neglect of knowledge : when he cannot pꝛeuail that way, but men will listen to instruction, then he will endeuoꝛ to buse them with profane fables and vaine babblings, which breed questions, rather then that godly edifying which is by faith : that so hee may withdraue their thoughtes, and steale away their hearts from those thinges which ought principally to bee looked vnto. Especiallve remember the aduice of Paule to his sonne Timotheus, Continue thou in the thinges which thou hast lerned and art perswaded thereof, knowing of whom thou hast learned them. Note the place. The Apostle pꝛesseth a stiffe and firme continuance in truths receiued, whē as these two thinges concurre therewith; a mans owne perswasion; and the consideration of those which first taught vs. First, for a mans owne perswasion, I pray you to obserue

1 Tim. 1, 6

1 Tim. 1, 4  
Chap. 6, 20

2 Tim. 3, 14

it, lest I should seeme in stead of grounded settlednesse, to commend selfe willed p̄suasiveness. By being perswaded, Paul meaneth thus much, as if he had sayd to Timothy, If it be an opinion which thou hast not sodainely entertained, but vpon good aduice, if it hath seated it selfe in thy iudgment, then, when as thou with care & conscience, with humilitie, with vsing the ordinary means, with prayer vnto God, with hearty desire to be guided in the truth hast enquired after knowledge, surely thou oughtest not, beeing by these degrees brought vnto it, and in this maner perswaded in it, rashlye and sodainly to forgoe it. This is that which is meant by perswasion in this place. A settlednesse of iudgement, following vpon an orderly course to bringe a man thereunto. The second thing that must concurre, is the consideration of the parties of whom wee haue learned: as if Paul had sayd, Obserue and marke well what kind of men they are, by whose ministry thou hast bene instructed; if they be men, who by their fidelity in teaching, and by the blessing of God vpon their labors, in vsing their ministry to convert mens soules, do carry with them the  
scale



seale of their ministry; nay if thine owne conscience can witness for them either of these out of thine owne feelinge, then beware of a contrarye doctrine: though I woulde not haue thee tie thy selfe to anye mans authoritie, yet be wel aduised before thou alter thy iudgement confirmed by such a ministerye. This was Paules meaning: and if you care to follow it, you shall in experience finde it good counsell. Thus I haue acquainted you with the best course I know as yet, both for the first informing, and the after-settlinge of your iudgement in Gods truth.

*Nymph.* I pray God to enable mee by his holie spirit, both to remember and to practise this your good aduice, I will now make this onely request: you knowe it is not inough to be a man of knowledge, vnlesse a man doe with knowledge ioyne obedience. *If you knowe those thinges* (say the our Sauour) *blessed are yee if you dooe them.* Wherefore as yon haue taught mee how to heare profitably for the gayning of knowledge, so I pray you direct me how I maye make good vse of hearing for the gouernement of my life,

Iohn 13, 17

*Epaph.*

how to draw  
things heard  
into practise.

Prou. 17, 20

Prou. 9, 8

James 1, 21

Psal. 141, 5

*Epaph.* ¶ In the first place therefore remember, as to pray to be guided into all truth by the spirit of truth, so to begge of God to direct the Preachers tongue, that he may speak vnto your conscience, and that his sermons may be as a glasse, in which you may behold the very true estate of your owne soule. Secondly, labour to put away from you that which Salomon calleth a frowarde heart, that is, a heart that cannot beare reproofe: remember it wel, and think seriously vpon it, that there can be no greater testimony of true wisdomes then to loue him that rebuketh you: and thereupon resolue with your selfe befoze hand, that whatsoeuer is spoken against your sin, be it neuer so tart or vnpleasing, yet you will receiue it with all meekenesse, and esteeme it as a precious oyle. Thirdly, in hearing, indure your selfe when the Preacher hauing layed the groundes of his doctrine commeth to application, to obserue what is spoken by way of exhorting, what by way of reproofe, what with an intent to minister comforte: each pointe being referred to these heades, shall much the better be remembered. Fourthly, when you are departed

parted from the sermon, forgette not to finde a time as soone as is possible, whilest thinges heard are most fresh, in which to commune with your owne hearte, and to ponder, and scanne, and search diligently those things which were deliuered. This is that which we call meditation, an exercise which David exceedingly delighted in: it is the same to the minde, that digestion is to the bodie: that which we heare is by it made our owne, so that the soule receiueth nourishment thereby. Now in the practise of this dutie, it is good to consider what thinges are presently necessarie, and what otherwise. Those thinges which are of present vse, are eftsoues to be layed holde vpon, and a certaine secret oath is to be made betwene God and a mans owne soule, to make hast and not to delay. a speedy and diligent execution: yea though the dutie inioyned be both in shewe painfull, and an enimie to worldly profit, an abridger of carnall delight, and a meanes by all likelihood to darken estimation and credit amongst men. If it be a matter of spirituall consolation, or of prouocation and encouragment to persist in a good ducty, it must be reputed as a  
chea-

Psal. 77, 6  
Luke 2, 19

Psal. 119, 97

Psal. 119, cvi

Verse 60.

Psal. 119, 81  
 Prov. 4, 21

hearing from heauen, and heart (as we say) to bee taken thereby against all, either inwarde assaults or outwarde discouragements whatsoever. As for other pointes, which maye seeme not to bee of so present vse, they are not to bee neglected, but to bee hidden and kept in the midst of the heart, that they maye not bee to seeke when the Lorde shall offer occasion to employ them. You must doe in this case as you doe in householde matters : if you find an implemēt which you knowe not how forthwith to bee stow, you will saye it is pittye to caste it awaye, it will bee noe charge to keepe it, once in seuen yeares it maye serue for a purpose, for the which you woulde bee loath to lacke it : so though some thinges which you heare, are not (as maye seeme) presently needefull, yet thou must make conscience safely to preserue them, because a time of vse maye come heereafter, in which, as it woulde bee a grieve to want direction, so the Lorde (it maye be) maye then in iustice denye that, which formerlye beeing offered was entertained with contempt. In a worde looke to it that you be well furnished for all occasions

cations, and know it to be the chiefe due-  
 tie, and the especiall marke of a good  
 Christian, to take heede, and alwaies to  
 haue respecte vnto the holy directions, 2 Pet. 1, 19  
Psal. 119, 6  
 which are soundlie deliuered from Gods  
 worde: so shall you become wise vnto sal-  
 uation, and perfect vnto all good workes.  
 This is the shortest and moste familiar 2 Tim. 3, 19  
17  
 direction that I can giue you, for the re-  
 ligious gouernemente of your life by the  
 forme of doctrine, which in the ordinarie  
 ministerie of the worde shall be deliuered  
 vnto you. Larger directions the many Rom. 6, 17  
 good booke which good menne haue writ-  
 ten of that matter, will plentifully affoord  
 you. This may serue at this time and it  
 may be God will offer vs an occasion to  
 talke of this matter moze at large heere-  
 after.

*Nymph.* I hope so too: and I shall for  
 my parte be readie to take any oportunitie,  
 being encouraged both by this your kinde-  
 nesse, and by the benefite and comforte  
 which I must needes confesse I haue re-  
 ceiued by this present conference. For this  
 time therefore I committe you to God,  
 whome I heartily beseech so to blesse your  
 labours in the ministerie, that you may

Dan. 12, 3  
8 Tim. 4, 16.

turne many to righteousness, and may take  
that heed vnto your self and vnto lerning,  
that you may both saue your selfe & them  
that heare you.

2 Tim. 2, 7

Col. 1, 9, 10,  
11

*Epp.* I thank you for your good prayer :  
I do also desire the same God for his son  
Christs sake, to giue you that good vnder-  
standing in all things, that you may be ful-  
filled with the knowledge of his will, and  
that he would also strengthen you with  
al might through his glorious power, that  
you may be fruitfull in al good works, and  
may keepe the profession of your hope  
without waivering to the end. And

Heb. 10, 23

so God be with you.

*To him be glorie for euer, of whom, and  
through whom, and for whome are all  
things. Rom. 11. 36.*

**FINIS.**

e  
s.  
n  
:  
t  
-  
n  
t  
o  
e